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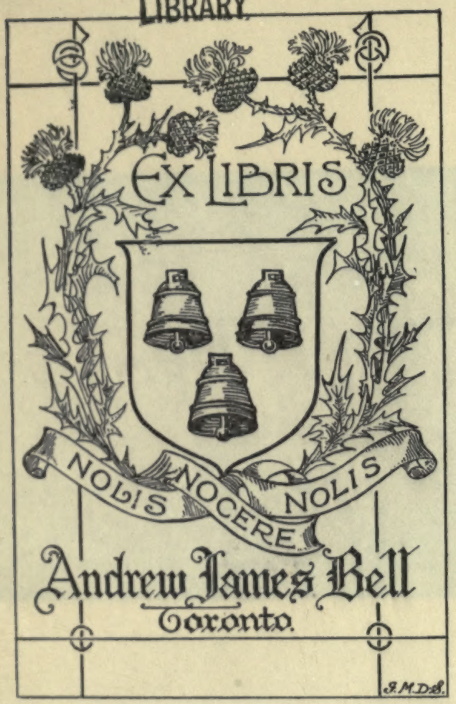

A. J. Bell
Victoria College

MARIA EDGEWORTH

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Maria Edgeworth
drawn by Adam Buck
circa 1790

MARIA EDGEWORTH

AND HER CIRCLE IN THE DAYS OF BUONAPARTE AND BOURBON

BY

CONSTANCE HILL

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELLEN G. HILL AND REPRODUCTIONS OF CONTEMPORARY PORTRAITS

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PREFACE

It is pleasant to be able to usher the reader into the genial presence of Maria Edgeworth even in this Preface. Here are her views upon such introductory compositions given in an unpublished letter to a young friend who had applied to her for criticism and advice.

"I feel as if I had been guilty of caprice or presumption," she writes, "in the alterations and omissions I have made in the preface, and must therefore add an explanation and reason or two—quite contrary to my father's system of giving no explanation or reason— But he is a man and I am but a woman.

"My general principles about prefaces are—that they should above all things be clear and simple—that the reader should not be perplexed, or have an idea of difficulty or labor at first setting out—therefore no fine writing, no twisted sentences— As to modesty, as much as you please—but it must be graceful, not awkward modesty—the reader likes a bow, as low as

you can make it, to show submission and respect, but it must not be an unpractised bow—it must show that the maker is a gentleman, who has learned to dance.

"The reader does not care what trouble the poor author has had, or what difficulties or misfortunes he has met with unless he can contrive to make them interesting and this is a nice point—too much or too little said spoils all. As at a dinner, or entertainment you please your guests by *suggesting* that you have taken all possible pains to provide all the dainties of the season and all the delicacies suited to their individual tastes, but if you go a step further and bring all the kitchen and the labors of culinary preparations before their eyes you disgust and you are accused of ill-breeding and bad taste."

Hoping to avoid such pit-falls we will proceed on our way!

In this work Miss Edgeworth's journeys to France and England are treated of, rather than her home life in Ireland; but to understand the character of our authoress we must think of her first at Edgeworthstown, living with her loved father, her third step-mother (who was also her intimate friend), and her many brothers and sisters, all of whom were cherished in her warm heart. Amidst the gay sights of Paris,

which she keenly enjoyed, in company with two young sisters, Maria writes: "How happy we are to be so fond of each other; how happy we are to be independent of all we see here! How happy that we have our dear home to return to at last!"

Miss Edgeworth's was a life full of work—work among her father's tenantry, where she gained her intimate knowledge of the Irish nature, and of literary work which constitutes her fame.

In person Maria was small and slight of stature. Her features were not regular, we are told, but she had "bright blue, very blue eyes," and "a singularly pleasant voice." Her hands and feet were so delicately small as to be almost child-like. "In natural appearance," writes Walter Scott, "she is quite the fairy Whippity Stourie of our nursery tale, the Whippity Stourie who came flying through the window to work all sorts of marvels. I will never believe but what she has a wand in her pocket, and pulls it out to conjure a little before she begins those very striking pictures of manners." And another contemporary author says: "She more than once suggested to me the good fairy from whose lips dropped diamonds and pearls."

"Edgeworthstown," remarks a recent writer, "was for many years as much a shrine at which all visitors to Ireland did homage, as Abbotsford was to those who visited Scotland."

Preface

Marc Auguste Pictet, who made a pilgrimage to Edgeworthstown in 1801, gives us a pleasant glimpse of the family in his "Voyage de Trois Mois." The first day he called Miss Edgeworth happened to be away from home. "We talked of Maria," he says, "who appeared to me to be truly appreciated by her family. In the very parlour where we were seated there stood the little table upon which she wrote her charming works, in the midst of the general buzz of talk, and of the noise of her younger brothers and sisters."

Upon his second visit he found the family at breakfast; "but this time," he says, "Maria and Mr. Lovell Edgeworth (the eldest son) were seated at the table. . . . I had eyes only for her. . . . I felt persuaded that something remarkable in face or figure would at once betray the authoress. I was mistaken. A small figure—eyes bent down and little expression in the face, as long as she remained silent—this was my first impression. But when she spoke—which was too seldom in my opinion—nothing could be better thought out or better expressed than that which proceeded out of her mouth."

M. Pictet goes on to speak of Lovell and of his sister Charlotte, with both of whom the reader will soon become acquainted. "Lovell is a highly educated young man, just moulded by the Univer-

sity of Edinburgh, where all willing students may become learned; Miss Charlotte is a young girl of sixteen years of age, beautiful and fresh as a rose; whose eyes, brimful of intelligence, showed that although she would not venture to speak herself, she lost not a word of all the conversation that was going on around her; and also that she knew how to listen; not an ordinary talent in young persons. But in this house nothing is ordinary."

The period of time which the present volume covers is the first twenty years of last century; and the narrative therefore conducts the reader through the stirring times of the French wars, when the very name of "Boney" was a terror to English children. A hundred years ago preparations were being made throughout France for the invasion of England, and Buonaparte was devising methods of conveying his army across the Channel. A triumphal arch was actually erected in his honour at Calais bearing the inscription: "The Road to London."

That road has recently been traversed by the French in truly triumphant fashion—not indeed amid the roar of cannon, but amid the roar of welcoming cheers. When President Fallières, the guest of our King and country, reached our shores in May of last year, his vessel passed between the lines of our warships all decked in his honour, while

the air rang with the "hurrahs" of our British tars and with the answering shouts of "Vive l'Angleterre!"

"Never within living memory," we are told, "had Dover been seen in such gorgeous gala attire or shown so splendid an enthusiasm." "C'est magnifique!" exclaimed a French spectator, "et c'est la paix!"

* * * * *

Before closing this Preface, we must acknowledge gratefully the kind help given by Mrs. Arthur G. Butler and other members of the Edgeworth family in the loan of unpublished material, and in furnishing information; for which latter we are also indebted to Madame la Duchesse de Broglie (*née* Armaillé) and Madame la Comtesse d'Armaillé (*née* Ségur), to Monsieur Pierre Amédée Pichot and to Monsieur Henri Manesse.

Portraits, drawings, letters and other objects have also been lent by the kindness of Mr. Bernard Holland, Mr. A. M. Broadley, Dr. Williamson, Mr. B. Quaritch, his Grace the Duke of Wellington, and Monsieur le Prince de Broglie; also by members of the families of Mr. Sutton Sharpe and of Mrs. Barbauld.

Quotations from Miss Edgeworth's printed correspondence are taken from "A Memoir of Maria Edgeworth with a Selection from her Letters, by the late Mrs. Edgeworth, 3 vols., printed for

private circulation, 1867." Much of the matter in this work is omitted in Mr. Augustus Hare's edition.

We are indebted to a grand-niece and namesake of the authoress for the loan of a gold enamelled chain given to Maria Edgeworth by Madame Récamier, which forms a decoration on the binding of this volume.

CONSTANCE HILL.

GROVE COTTAGE, FROGNAL,
HAMPSTEAD,
July 1909.

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The central design on the binding of this book represents a travelling-coach of the period. The frame is a copy of a gold enamelled chain presented by Madame Récamier to Maria Edgeworth

MARIA EDGEWORTH

CHAPTER I

A PEACEFUL INVASION

In the autumn of the year 1801 rumours were spreading far and wide that a treaty of peace with France would soon be signed—France, which for ten years had been a closed country to her English neighbours.

Mrs. Barbauld, writing to a friend in the month of October, says: "I want to wish you joy on the peace, which came at last so unexpectedly, and almost overwhelmed us with the good news. We have hardly done illuminating and bouncing and popping upon the occasion. And now France lies like a huge loadstone on the other side of the Channel, and will draw every mother's child of us to it. Those who know French are refreshing their memories—those who do not are learning it; and every one is planning in some way or other to get a sight of the promised land."

The Peace of Amiens was not finally ratified until the end of March 1802, but as soon as that act was accomplished, English visitors of all sorts

hurried over to the French capital. They were eager to see the city "over which the revolutionary storm had swept, and which had since been enriched with the spoils of Europe."

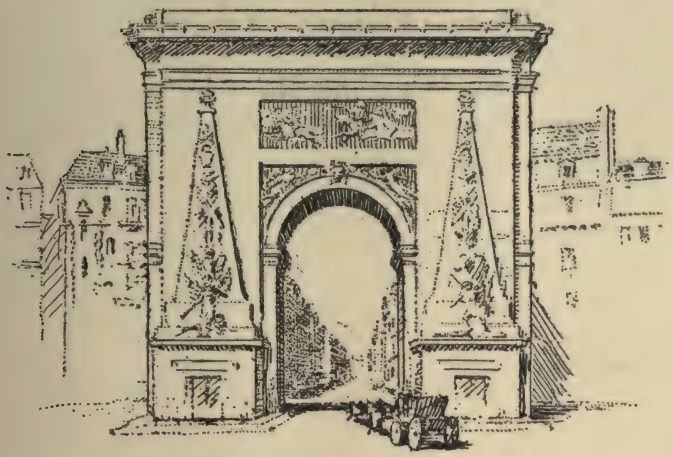
Maria Edgeworth, in her distant Irish home, had always been in touch with French persons of interest who, from time to time, had visited Edgeworthstown, and now that the gates of France were at last thrown open the temptation to enter them was felt to be powerful; so powerful indeed that the scheme of a visit to Paris was forthwith conceived. This scheme took practical shape in the following month of September, when Mr. and Mrs. Edgeworth, Maria and her young sister Charlotte left Edgeworthstown *en route* for France.

On reaching London the travellers halted, for a few days, at Nerot's Hotel—an inn which formerly stood in Clifford Street, Bond Street. During their short sojourn in town, Mr. Edgeworth, we are told, purchased a "roomy coach" in which the family could perform their journeys on the Continent, in accordance with the custom of the time.

On October 4, the Edgeworths landed at Calais after having had "a very rough passage across the Channel, which lasted three hours and a half." This must have been a comparatively quick passage for those days of sailing-packets,

for another traveller speaks of a crossing lasting as long as thirteen hours.

The Edgeworths went to Paris by a circuitous route in order to see some of the Flemish and Brabantian towns. "We left Gravelines," writes



THE PORTE ST. DENIS

Maria, "with an equipage at which Sobriety herself could not have forborne to laugh. To our London coach were fastened by long rope traces, six Flemish horses of different heights, but each large and clumsy enough to have drawn an English waggon. The nose of the foremost horse was thirty-five feet from the body of the coach; their hoofs [were] all shaggy, their manes all uncombed and high, high upon their backs sat

perfectly perpendicular, long-waisted postillions in jack-boots with pipes in their mouths."

From Gravelines the party proceeded to Dunkirk, Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, Valenciennes, Cambray and Chantilly, and finally reached the French capital on the afternoon of October 29. We fancy we see the family coach with its horses and postillions turning under the great archway of the Porte St. Denis and Maria looking eagerly out of the window for her first sight of " la grande ville de Paris."

CHAPTER II

A WELCOME IN PARIS

In a letter dated "Paris, Wednesday," Maria Edgeworth writes: "We arrived about three o'clock, and lodged for a few days at the Hôtel de Courlande . . . a magnificent hotel in the fine square, formerly Place Louis Quinze, afterwards Place de la Révolution, and now Place de la Concorde. Here the guillotine was once at work night and day, and here died Louis Seize and Marie Antoinette and Madame Roland. Opposite to us is the Seine and *La Lanterne*."

"In the middle of this Place, which is between the Champs Elysées and the Tuileries," writes Charlotte Edgeworth, "the Revolutionists erected a statue, which they called the Statue of Liberty. The guillotine was erected opposite, that it might appear that when the heads of the victims were cut off they bowed to the statue. . . .

"There is a woman in the madhouse [here] who is well known to have been at the head of one of the troops of women assassins . . . who still

begs for money to give to Marat and Robespierre, whom she calls 'des braves gens,' and who repeats the same words that she was employed to cry out to the mobs."

We wonder if this woman was "la belle Liégeoise," mentioned by Thiers, who became insane after her deeds of violence.

Miss Edgeworth writes on October 31: "I left off at the Hôtel de Courlande. We were told there was a fine view of Paris from the leads, and so indeed there is; and the first object that struck us was the telegraph at work!"

Mr. Edgeworth had invented one of the earliest semaphore telegraphs, which was then gradually coming into use. It was his apparatus which signalled the first message across the sea between Ireland and Scotland.

"The first *voiture de remise* (job-coach in plain English) into which we got," continues the writer, "had belonged to—whom do you think?—to the Princess Elizabeth. The Abbé Edgeworth had probably been in this very coach with her."

On leaving the Hôtel de Courlande, the Edgeworths took up their abode in a house in the Rue de Lille, a street which lies to the south of the Seine and runs parallel with the Quai de Voltaire. The address given in their letters is, "chez le Citoyen Verber, Rue de Lille, Nu. 525."

This high number, it seems, marked the position

of the house in a whole district, and not in the street itself: a mode of numbering which makes it difficult now to identify any given dwelling-place. The only clue to the position of the Edgeworths' house is that it faced the Hôtel de Villeroy. The Rue de Lille, like most of the older streets in the Faubourg St. Germain, is composed of tall, dignified-looking houses, whose large *portes cochère* open, for the most part, into spacious court-yards.

Paris, as the Edgeworths saw it in 1802, was a very different place to what it is now. Carlyle, writing as late as 1824, says: "With few exceptions the streets are narrow, crowded and unclean; the kennel in the middle, and a lamp over it here and there on a rope [stretched] from side to side. There are no footpaths."

The poet Rogers, who visited the French capital, like the Edgeworths, in the autumn of 1802, has given a graphic description of the life of the city as he found it. "I wish I could give you a *tableau de Paris*," he writes to an English friend. "But where shall we begin? With the narrow streets, where the approach of a *voiture* or of a *cabriolet*, with its tinkling bell and its cry of 'Garde! Garde!' produces a flight and a rout; or with the squares and bridges, where an array of shoe-blacks, formidable in number and outcry, salute you with '*Ici on tond des chiens et coupe les*

oreilles aux chiens et chats'; or shall we walk in the Tuileries Gardens, where there are more statues than trees; or shall we look into the *bals bourgeois*, where a hundred couples waltz nightly; or are you inclined for a *spectacle?* Will you see 'Puss in Boots' wash her whiskers with her paws, as she does every evening in the boulevards, to the delight of all the grown children; or shall I introduce you to Mdlle. Duchenois, who was crowned last night in *Phèdre* amidst tears and acclamations? No, rather come with me and admire 'those gay creatures of the element,' the *corps de ballet*, who will enchant you with their delicate movements and with their beautiful groups in groves and caverns, and among the 'plighted clouds.' . . ."

"The French are a lively and clever people. . . . In the comforts of life they are many centuries behind us, but in its elegancies they have no rivals; and in their liberality to strangers they are models for the rest of the world."

"The day after our arrival," writes Maria Edgeworth, "M. Delessert (he whom M. Pictet describes as a French Rumford) invited us to spend the evening with his mother and sister. We went, found an excellent house, a charming family, with whom we felt we were perfectly acquainted after we had been in the room with them for five minutes."

These words recall a sentence in "Manœuvring": "Characters that are free from artifice immediately coalesce, as metals that are perfectly pure can be readily cemented together."

The happy meeting described must have taken place in the Hôtel d'Uzès in the Rue Montmartre, where the Delesserts were then living.

NOTRE DAME AND THE SEINE

"Madame Delessert, the mother, an elderly lady of about sixty," continues Maria, "has the species of politeness and conversation that my Aunt Ruxton has. I need not say how much I like her. Her daughter, Madame Gautier, has fine, large black eyes—very obliging and sensible, and well dressed. . . . Rousseau's "Letters on Botany" were written for this lady; he was a friend of the family."

This statement is confirmed by a French writer

—M. Bourdon—who tells us that J. J. Rousseau wrote expressly for Madame Delessert and her young daughter his "Lettres sur la Botanique." He also made for them a herbal of flowers dried by himself and inscribed with his own hand in both Latin and French. This memorable relic, preserved with care in the Delessert family, was shown to M. Bourdon.

To return to Maria's account. "Madame Gautier," she says, "does not live in Paris but at a country-house at Passy, the Richmond of Paris, about two miles out of town. She invited us to spend a day there, and a most pleasant day we passed. The situation beautiful, the house furnished with elegance and good sense, the society most agreeable.

"[Among the guests present were] Madame de Pastoret, a literary and fashionable lady, and M. de Pastoret, her husband, a man of diplomatic knowledge; Lord Henry Petty, son of Lord Lansdowne, with whom my father had much conversation; the Swiss Ambassador, whose name I will not attempt to spell; M. Dumont, a Swiss gentleman travelling with Lord Henry Petty, very sensible and entertaining; * . . . M. d'Etaing, of whom I know nothing; and last, but

* M. Dumont made Jeremy Bentham's principles and theories known to the French.

indeed not least, the Abbé Morellet, of whom you have heard my father speak.

"O! my dear Aunt Mary,* how you would love that man, and we need not be afraid of loving him for he is near eighty. But it is impossible to believe that he is so old when one either hears him speak or sees him move. He has all the vivacity, and feeling, and wit of youth, and all the gentleness that youth ought to have. His conversation is delightful, nothing too much or too little; sense and gaiety, and learning and reason, and that perfect knowledge of the world which mixes so well but so seldom with a knowledge of books.

"He invited us to breakfast, and this morning we spent with him. . . . He has a sister living with him, Mme. de Montigny, an aimable, sensible woman. Her daughter was married to Marmontel, who died a few years ago; she, alas! is not in Paris."

The names of M. and Mme. de Pastoret occur often in Miss Edgeworth's letters. Her first acquaintance with them soon ripened into friendship.

The Pastorets occupied a house which is now No. 6 in the Place de la Concorde, in the same row of stately buildings of which the Hôtel de Courlande formed one.

"Maria told you of M. and Mme. de Pastoret,"

* Miss Mary Sneyd.

writes Mr. Edgeworth to a relative. "In the same house on another floor . . . we met M. and Mme. Suard. He is accounted one of the most refined critics of Paris, and has for many years been at the head of newspapers of different denominations: at present he is at the head of the *Publiciste*. . . . Madame Suard has the remains of much beauty, a *bel esprit*, and aims at singularity and independence of sentiment. Would you believe it, Mr. Day paid his court to her thirty years ago?"

The eccentric Thomas Day, author of "Sandford and Merton," had been an intimate friend and companion of Mr. Edgeworth in early life, as the reader will remember, and was the prototype of the hero of Maria Edgeworth's admirable story of "Forester." Holding, like Forester, strongly democratic opinions, he had a contempt for all the refinements of life, and was especially "suspicious of the female sex and averse to risking his happiness for their charms." He paid a visit to France between the years 1760 and 1770, and it must have been then that he had succumbed to the attractions of the lively and beautiful Mdlle. Panckouke (afterwards Mme. Suard). In a letter to his friend Edgeworth, Day describes humorously the change that was being wrought in his outward appearance and manners under Parisian influences.

"Oh, my dear friend," he says, "you'd be quite surprised to see me now—Oh Lord! I am quite another thing to what I was. I *talks* French like anything; I wears a velvet coat and a fine waistcoat, all over gold, and dresses quite *comme il faut;* and trips about with my hat under my arm, and '*Serviteur, Monsieur,*' and '*J'ai l'honneur, Madame,*' &c. Oh dear, it's charming upon my soul!—good night—my paper's out and I must *dress for the concert.* I pity you poor country puts, that see nothing of the world, and when I return, will try to teach you how to behave."

The names of M. and Mme. Suard, as well as those of the Abbé Morellet, Marmontel—and many others that occur in the Edgeworth letters,—carry us back in thought to the great days of the French *salons*—even to that of the celebrated Mme. Geoffrin. It is to Mme. Suard's pen that we owe the best description of that lady's appearance in later life, just as we see it in Chardin's fine portrait. Mme. Suard speaks of "her tall figure, her silver hair surmounted by a lace cap fastened beneath the chin, of her noble and dignified bearing, and of her 'air de raison mêlé à la bonté.'"

There is a pretty story of Mme. Geoffrin's connection with the Suards given in Janet Aldis's interesting work upon Madame Geoffrin.

Suard, we are told, when he first arrived in Paris as a young literary man without either friends or fortune, had received much kindness from the great *salonière*—a kindness seasoned however with a good deal of sage advice. When, one day, he informed her that he intended to marry the young Mdlle. Panckouke, who, he confessed, had no *dot*, Mme. Geoffrin urged him strongly to abandon his scheme. But finding him immovable, she waxed so bitter in her wrath against the self-willed folly of youth that his proud spirit rebelled, and he left her in anger.

He was married soon afterwards to Mdlle. Panckouke, and for several years Suard saw nothing of his old friend. At last a common friend, Mme. Necker, determined to bring about a meeting between Mme. Geoffrin and Mme. Suard.

Neither of the ladies in question knew of Mme. Necker's intention, and when Mme. Geoffrin learned that the beautiful and modest woman (on the opposite side of the dinner-table) was Suard's young wife, she looked at her with so much interest that the lady was almost disconcerted.

When the meal was finished Mme. Geoffrin went up to Mme. Suard and began to make herself pleasant to her in her own tactful way. She inquired about their home-life, and drew forth a confession that they had not grown very rich. Then she graciously promised to visit them.

A Welcome in Paris

"The next day," writes Mme. Suard, "my porter brought me a parcel in which I found a superb dress. I went to thank Mme. Geoffrin, for I did not doubt that the present came from her. She forbade me to mention it to any one."

Presently Suard was announced, and the imperious but true-hearted woman, who never feared to own herself mistaken, threw herself into his arms.

"I was wrong, I was wrong!" she cried in contrition. "Though she has no *dot*, she is worth more than the most tranquil celibacy or the richest marriage."*

* *See* "Madame Geoffrin, her Salon and her Times," by Janet Aldis. Published by Methuen & Co.

CHAPTER III

A GRACIOUS QUEEN OF SOCIETY

Miss Edgeworth writes in December 1802 to her cousin Miss Ruxton:*

"My aunt asks me what I think of French society? All I have seen of it I like extremely, but we hear from all sides that we see only the best of Paris—the men of literature and the *ancienne noblesse*. . . . It is no easy matter to get into [this] agreeable society. We hear that many English of rank and fortune far, far superior to ours cannot force or win or buy their way into it. They put their trust in chariots and in horses —which are of little, or no avail except with *les nouveaux riches*, who are not worth seeing or hearing. . . . My father has seen something of them at Madame Tallien's (now Cabarus), and was disgusted.

"Madame Récamier is of quite an opposite sort, though in the first fashion a graceful and *decent*

* The quotations from Maria Edgeworth's letters in this chapter are taken principally from unpublished MSS.

beauty of excellent character. . . . We have dined at her house (one room in which is said to have cost £20,000) with tragic and comic poets, metaphysicians, and bankers, and the richest man in Paris; beside whom Charlotte had the felicity of sitting at dinner.

"I must further inform you that we have been at the Opera with Mme. Récamier, and . . . at one of her balls. . . . She is very pretty and graceful, but nothing marvellous—except what is marvellous in a beauty who has been born and bred in flattery, and nursed in the lap of luxury, she is *good* in every sense of the word. She is obliging in her manners, and seems to think of others more than of herself.

"She produces a great sensation whenever she appears in public."

Mme. Récamier had visited England in the spring of this same year, and Mr. Edgeworth speaks of her in one of his letters as "the beautiful lady who had been nearly squeezed to death in London." So modest and so unself-conscious, however, had been her deportment there that a journalist of the day writes: "She appears not to hear all the praise and not to see all the flattering attentions of which she is the object everywhere. A witty man said to her yesterday, 'Madame, you intend to leave here then, without having seen Madame Récamier?'"

Sainte-Beuve speaks of her at this epoch as

"brillante fêtée, applaudie, la plus jeune reine des élégances."

Kotzebue, who visited Paris in 1804, and met her in society, noticed that she wore no diamonds. "Amiability, grace, and modesty," he says, "are the three graces that preside over her toilette."

At the time the Edgeworths were in Paris M. and Mme. Récamier were living in a house in the Rue du Mont-Blanc (afterwards known as the Chaussée d'Antin). This house, or "Hôtel," as it was then called, had formerly belonged to Necker, who sold it to M. Récamier in 1798. The negotiations for this sale led to a meeting between Necker's daughter, Mme. de Staël, and Mme. Récamier, which, it seems, was the origin of their lifelong friendship.

M. Récamier, who was a wealthy banker, had spared no money in rendering his new house beautiful in every detail. A celebrated architect of the day—Berthaut—had been given *carte blanche* in the rearrangement of the rooms and in the design of the furniture. He had transformed the dwelling, says a contemporary writer, "into a veritable fairy palace."

Miss Berry has given us a description of the suite of apartments. Writing in April 1802, she says: "Went to the house of Mme. Récamier. We were resolved not to leave Paris without seeing what is called the most elegant house in it.

Gérard, Pinxt.

MADAME RÉCAMIER

There are no large rooms nor a great many of them, but it is certainly fitted up with all the *recherché* and expense possible in what is now called *le goût antique*. . . . All the chairs are mahogany enriched with ormolu, and covered either with cloth or silk; those in the *salon* trimmed with flat gold lace in good taste."

"Mme. Récamier," writes the poet Rogers, "outshines the Consul himself! Her bath and bedchamber are hung with silks of many colours and lighted with aromatic lamps and alabaster vases. Her bed is an Etruscan couch, and every table is supported by caryatides in bronze and gold."

"Her bed is reckoned the most beautiful in Paris," writes Miss Berry. "The curtains are muslin-trimmed . . . with gold lace . . . [and are] suspended from a sort of carved *couronne de roses*, and tucked up in drapery upon the wall."

A coloured drawing of this bedroom was made by Sutton Sharpe (the elder), who was in Paris in 1802. It accords in every detail with the foregoing descriptions. Our illustration is taken from this drawing. Mr. Sharpe remarks in a letter of this same date: "Madame Récamier's bedchamber is more superb than I could have conceived."

Besides the town-house, the Récamiers possessed at this time the Château of Clichy-la-Garenne, which they used as a summer residence. Clichy

being within reach of Paris, they were able to keep up intercourse with their friends, and many a *fête*

MADAME RÉCAMIER'S BEDCHAMBER

was given by them in their fine grounds, which sloped down to the banks of the Seine.

One of their friends—a certain Baronne de V.—a lady who held a high post in the Consular Court,

has happily described for us the life at Clichy-la-Garenne.*

"It was there that Madame Récamier ought to be seen," she writes, "for it was there, in the country, in the midst of the poor whom she clothed and tended, that one learnt to know her very soul, which was yet more perfect than the charming casket in which it was enclosed."

The Baronne has given an account of a *fête*-day at the château.

On arriving there one morning at ten o'clock she found a large assemblage already gathered in the *salon*, amongst whom were representatives of all shades of opinion and politics. They had been invited to meet some English guests of note, including Charles James Fox and Lord and Lady Holland. The Baronne noticed some signs of embarrassment in this mixed company, but no sooner had the door opened to admit their gracious hostess, who had been absent at early mass, than all such feeling was dispelled, and ease and cheerfulness at once prevailed.

After *déjeuner* the company took a stroll in the park, and when they again met in the castle they found, to their pleasure, that a treat of no common kind awaited them. The great actor Talma was

* *See* "Mémoires de Constant, Premier Valet de l'Empereur," in which the Baronne de V.'s *Mémoires* are incorporated.

about to declaim some passages from French translations of *Othello* and of *Macbeth*, a choice made by Mme. Récamier in compliment to her English guests. "He needed only to pass his hand through his hair," remarks the Baronne, "and to contract his brows to appear the very impersonation of the Moor of Venice . . . so much so that terror seized upon his audience." He next gave Macbeth's account of his interview with the witches, of which the closing words in the French are:

> Et tous trois dans les airs en fuyant loin de moi
> M'ont laissé pour adieu ces mots, *Tu seras roi.*

"The low, mysterious voice of the actor, as he pronounced these words, the way in which he placed his finger on his lips, while his whole expression changed to one of horror at the remembrance of the loathsome vision, all combined to produce an effect as new to us as it was marvellous, and of which no description can give an idea.

". . . After the departure of Talma the company were entertained by music, [when] Madame Récamier, being pressed to sing, sat down to her harp and accompanied herself in a graceful song by Plantade. Need I add," remarks the Baronne, "that we were all enraptured with the voice of Madame Récamier?"

More guests arrived, among whom were the Duchess of Gordon and her beautiful daughter, the

Lady Georgiana. "The virgin modesty of this *belle Anglaise*," we are told, "the sweetness and charm of her eyes and of her whole expression, attracted universal admiration."

Next appeared the great dancer Vestris, who had come, supposing Mme. Récamier to be alone, to superintend the rehearsal of a gavotte—a gavotte of his own composition—to be danced the following evening at a ball by both Mme. Récamier and the Lady Georgiana. "There could be no question," observes the Baronne, "as to the impropriety of allowing such a master of his art as Vestris to make an expedition to Clichy in vain, and the two ladies therefore consented to perform the gavotte in our presence. It was danced to the music of a harp and horn.

"Never surely did nymphs more light of foot charm mortal eyes! Madame Récamier held a tambourine in her hand, which she raised above her head at each movement of the dance with renewed grace; while the Lady Georgiana, of more timid mood, holding a light scarf in her hand instead of a tambourine, seemed wishful to use it for a veil. Thus there appeared in all their attitudes a combination of happy ease and of gentle coyness which lent yet further charms to forms the most beautiful.

". . . In the midst of the general enthusiasm," adds the writer, "it was amusing to note the

ecstasy of the good Vestris, who seemed to attribute all this poetry of form, of movement, of expression, and of attitude to the sole inspiration of his own genius!"

Here an interlude occurred bringing with it a dance of a very different description.

Mme. Récamier conducted her guests in a stroll through the village of Clichy, where a peasant wedding had just taken place, and where in the garden of the inn the newly married pair and their friends were all dancing.

"Madame Récamier," says the Baronne, "persuaded us to join in this *fête champêtre;* and presently might be seen tall, dignified diplomatists and portly financiers endeavouring to rival in agility the capers of the merry peasants."

On returning once more to the château the company found among the latest arrivals Mme. de Staël, Mme. Viotte, General Marmont and his wife, and the Marquis and Marquise de Luchesini. The acting of proverbs and charades was now proposed.

"We began," says the writer, "by some dramatic scenes; the first being Hagar in the Wilderness. Madame de Staël took the part of Hagar, her young son the part of Ishmael, and Madame Récamier that of the angel. Madame de Staël (who acted with great pathos) seemed, as she stood before us, her long, dishevelled hair hanging about

her shoulders, the very character incarnate of Hagar, whilst Madame Récamier, in her pure and celestial beauty, seemed the actual impersonation of the heavenly messenger."

Charades succeeded, in which every one present took part, some performing their *rôles* well, others ill—"the most awkward affording the most amusement."

At eleven o'clock supper was served—that "meal of confidence and friendship which forms so pleasantly the closing act of a day's comedy."

At midnight the company dispersed, and the *fête* of Clichy-la-Garenne came to an end.

Mme. Récamier counted among her chosen friends many artists and authors. She understood their sensitive natures, and was ever ready to listen with sympathy to their personal confidences. "Elle écoutait avec séduction," remarks Sainte-Beuve. She had a friendship with La Harpe which dated from the days of her childhood. This poet was afflicted with an irascible temper, which greatly annoyed his acquaintance, and often turned them into enemies, but he was uniformly amiable in his deportment towards his gentle young friend.

Maria Edgeworth, writing from Paris in December 1802, says:

"We went with Madame Récamier to La Harpe's house to hear him repeat some of his own verses. He lives in a wretched house, and we

went up dirty stairs, through dirty passages, where I wondered how fine ladies' trains and noses could go, and were received in a dark, small den by the philosopher . . . in a dirty reddish nightgown, and very dirty nightcap bound round the forehead with a superlatively dirty chocolate-coloured ribbon. [Here] we met the celebrated English wit Lady Elizabeth Foster and a Russian Princess Dalgourski, who, when she was presented to Madame Bonaparte, wore a diadem of diamonds worth twenty thousand pounds! [In fact] La Harpe had a *levée*, or rather a *couchée*, of fine ladies.

"Madame Récamier, the beautiful, the elegant, robed in white satin, trimmed with white fur, seated herself on the elbow of his arm-chair . . . and used all the soft persuasion of the Graces to prevail upon him to repeat some verses. He took hold of her arm, stroked the white satin and fur, and said, 'Ah, ma belle Julie, que je vous aime aujourd'hui, vous voilà bien habillée.' . . . La Harpe is writing a poem on the death of the King of France in which he has introduced the Abbé Edgeworth. He complained that the name of Edgeworth was so unmanageable in verse that he was obliged to modify it, and to sweeten it to his own taste—whether he has sweetened it to ours we cannot tell."

CHAPTER IV

A SWEDISH LOVER

MARIA EDGEWORTH, writing soon after her arrival in Paris, says: "We have been to the Théâtre Français and to the Théâtre Feydau, both fine houses: decorations, &c., superior to English: acting much superior in comedy; in tragedy they bully and rant and throw themselves into Academy attitudes too much."

No great tragic actor happened to be in Paris just at that time; but Maria had been fortunate in seeing both Talma and his wife perform at a theatre in Brussels. "The play," she says, "was Racine's *Andromaque*. Madame Talma played Andromaque, and her husband Orestes; both exquisitely well. I had no idea of fine acting till I saw them, and my father, who had seen Garrick, and Mrs. Siddons, and Yates, and Le Kain, says he never saw anything superior to Madame Talma."

The Rev. Edward Stanley, who saw Talma act in the play of *Manlius* a few years later, thus describes the effect he produced upon his audience:

"To the thunder of applause [upon the rising of the curtain], succeeded a breathless silence—Talma stepped forth in the Roman toga of Manlius. His figure is bad, short and rather clumsy, his countenance deficient in dignity and natural expression, but with all these deductions, he shines like a meteor when compared with Kemble. He is body and soul, finger and thumb, head and foot, involved in his character; and so say you [in England] is Miss O'Neil, but Talma and Miss O'Neil are different and distant as the poles. She is nature, he is art, but it is the perfection of art, and so splendid a specimen well deserves the approbation he so profusely receives." *

Charlotte Edgeworth remarks in one of her letters: "Maria is writing a story, and has a little table by the fire at which she sits, as she used to do at Edgeworthstown, for half an hour together without stirring with her pen in her hand; then she scribbles on very fast."

It seems that this story was the charming tale of "Mme. de Fleury," the scene of which is laid in Paris at the time of the Revolution. It opens with an incident which the reader may remember. Some poor children, locked up during the absence of their mother, who is the breadwinner, meet with an accident, and the screams of a child with a broken

* "Before and after Waterloo," by Edward Stanley, sometime Bishop of Norwich.

arm arrest the attention of Mme. de Fleury, passing in her carriage down the miserable street. After effecting the release and proper treatment of the injured child, Mme. de Fleury opens a "Shelter" for children who have no one to guard them at home, and the "Shelter" gradually becomes an infants' school.

These incidents were facts in the life of Mme. de Pastoret, who related them to Miss Edgeworth. Her infants' school was the first established in Paris. The description of Mme. de Fleury's imprisonment in her own house in the Place de la Concorde during the Reign of Terror, and of her being forced by her jailors to witness the executions which took place before her windows, were also incidents in the life of Mme. de Pastoret.

The name of "Fleury" was taken by Miss Edgeworth from the country-seat of the de Pastorets —the Château de Fleury.

Miss Edgeworth writes to her aunt, Mrs. Ruxton, on December 1:

"I have been treasuring up for some time everything I have seen and heard which I think would interest you; and now my little head is so full that I must empty it, or it would certainly burst. . . .

"I wish I could paint the different people we have seen in little William's magic-lanthorn, and show them to you. At Madame Delessert's house there are, and have been for years, meetings of the

most agreeable and select society in Paris. . . . To recommend Madame Delessert still more powerfully to you, I must tell you that she was the benefactress of Rousseau; he was, it is said, never good or happy except in her society; to her bounty he owed his retreat in Switzerland. She is nobly charitable, but if it were not for her friends no one would find out half the good she does. One of her acts of beneficence is recorded in Berquin's 'Ami des Enfants,' but even her own children cannot tell in which story it is. Her daughter, Madame Gautier, gains upon our esteem every day.

"Turn the handle of the magic-lanthorn. Who is this graceful figure, with all the elegance of Court manners and all the simplicity of domestic virtue? She is Madame de Pastoret. She was chosen preceptress to the Princess in the *ancien régime* in opposition to the wife of Condorcet, and M. de Pastoret had I forget how many votes more than Condorcet when it was put to the vote who should be preceptor to the Dauphin at the beginning of the Revolution. . . . [M. de Pastoret] was President of the First Assembly, and at the head of the King's Council: the four other Ministers of that Council all perished! He escaped by his courage. As for her, the Marquis de Chastelleux's speech describes her: 'Elle n'a point d'expression sans grâce, et point de grâce sans expression.'

"Turn the magic-lanthorn. Here comes Madame

THE RESIDENCE OF THE DE PASTORETS

Suard and Monsieur, a member of the Academy; very good company at their house. Among others, Lally Tollendal . . . said to be more eloquent than any man in France; M. de Montmorenci, worthy of his great name.

"Push on the magic-lanthorn slide. Here comes Boissy d'Anglas: a fine head! Such a head as you may imagine the man to have who, by his single courage, restrained the fury of one of the National Assemblies when the head of one of the deputies was cut off and set on the table before him.

"Next comes Camille Jordan, with great eloquence of pen, not of tongue; and M. de Prony, a great mathematician, of whom you don't care to know more, but you would if you heard him.

"Who comes next? Madame Campan, mistress of the first boarding-school here, who educated Madame Louis Buonaparte, and who professes to keep her pupils entirely separate from servants, according to 'Practical Education,' and who paid us many compliments. . . . At Madame Campan's, as my father told you, we met the beautiful Madame Récamier. . . .

"Who comes next? Kosciusko, cured of his wounds, simple in his manners, like all truly great men. . . .

"Who comes next? M. de Leuze, who translated the 'Botanic Garden' as well as it could be translated into Fénelon prose; and M. and Madame de

Vindé, who have a superb gallery of paintings, and the best concerts in Paris, and a library of eighteen thousand volumes, counted and well arranged; and what charms me more than either the books or the pictures, a little grand-daughter of three years old, very like my sweet Fanny. . . . She sat on my knee and caressed me with her soft, warm little hands, and looked at me with her smiling, intelligent eyes.

"*Dec.* 3.—Here I am at the brink of the last page, and I have said nothing of the Apollo, the Invalides, or Les Sourds et Muets. What shall I do? I cannot speak of everything at once, and when I speak to you so many things crowd upon my mind.

* * * * *

"Here, my dear Aunt, I was interrupted in a manner that will surprise you as much as it surprised me, by the coming in of M. Edelcrantz, a Swedish gentleman whom we have mentioned to you, of superior understanding and mild manners. He came to offer me his hand and heart!!

"My heart, you may suppose, cannot return his attachment, for I have seen but very little of him, and have not had time to form any judgment, except that I think nothing could tempt me to leave my own dear friends to live in Sweden.

"My dearest Aunt, I write to you the first moment, as next to my father and mother no

person in the world feels so much interest in all that concerns me. I need not tell you that my father, 'such in this moment as in all the past,' is kindness itself: kindness far superior to what I deserve, but I am grateful for it."

Writing to her cousin, Miss Sophy Ruxton, a few days later, Maria says: "I take it for granted, my dear friend, that you have by this time seen a letter I wrote a few days ago to my aunt. To you, as to her, every thought of my mind is open. I persist in refusing to leave my country and my friends to live at the Court of Stockholm, and [M. Edelcrantz] tells me (of course) that there is nothing he would not sacrifice for me except his duty: he has been all his life in the service of the King of Sweden, has places under him, is actually employed in collecting information for a large political establishment. He thinks himself bound in honour to finish what he has begun. He says he should not fear the ridicule or blame that would be thrown upon him by his countrymen for quitting his country at his age, but that he should despise himself if he abandoned his duty for any passion. This is all very reasonable, but reasonable for him only, not for me; and I have never felt anything for him but esteem and gratitude."

Mrs. Edgeworth, the intimate friend as well as the biographer of her step-daughter, writing of this affair many years later, observes:

"Maria was mistaken as to her own feelings. She refused M. Edelcrantz, but she felt much more for him than esteem and admiration; she was exceedingly in love with him. Mr. Edgeworth left her to decide for herself; but she saw too plainly what it would be to us to lose her, and what she would feel at parting from us. She decided rightly for her own future happiness and for that of her family, but she suffered much at the time and long afterwards. . . . From what I saw of M. Edelcrantz, I think he was a man capable of really valuing her. I believe he was much attached to her, and deeply mortified at her refusal. He continued to reside in Sweden after the abdication of his master, and was always distinguished for his high character and great abilities. He never married. . . .

"By what accident it happened that Maria had, long before she saw the Chevalier Edelcrantz, chosen Sweden for the scene of 'The Knapsack,' I do not know, but I remember his expressing his admiration of that beautiful little piece, and his pleasure in the fine characters of the Swedish gentlemen and peasants."

CHAPTER V

PARISIAN GAIETIES

CHARLOTTE EDGEWORTH writes, on December 10, to one of her aunts:

"I will introduce you to our company last night at the Delesserts'. All *soirées* here begin at nine o'clock.

"Madame Edgeworth is announced—room full without being crowded—enough light and warmth. M. Delessert *père* at a card-table with a gentleman who is a partner in his bank, and an elderly lady. There is a warm corner in the room, which is always large enough to contain Madame Delessert and two or three ladies and gentlemen. Madame Delessert advances to receive Madame Edgeworth, and invites her to sit beside her with many kind words and looks. Madame Gautier expresses her joy at seeing us.

"Now we are seated. M. Benjamin Delessert advances with his bow to the ladies. Madame Gautier, my father, and Maria get together. M. Pictet, nephew to our dear Pictet, makes his

bow and adds a few words to each. . . . Madame Grivel enters, a clever, good-natured little woman, wife to the partner who is at cards. Enter M. François Delessert and another gentleman. How the company divides and changes itself I am not at present supposed to know, for young M. Pictet has seated himself between my mother and me, and has a long conversation with me, in which Madame Grivel now and then joins; Mademoiselle Lullin, our friend Pictet's sister, his and her virtues are discussed; physics and metaphysics ensue; harmony, astonishing power of chords in music, glass broken by vibration, dreams, Spain, its manners and government. Young M. Pictet has been there: people there have little to do because their wants are easily supplied.

"Here come tea and cakes, sweetmeats, grapes, cream, and all the goods of life. The lady who was playing at cards now came and sat beside me, amusing me for a long time with a conversation on —what do you think? Politics and the state of France! M. François repeats some good lines very well. Laughter and merriment. Now we are obliged to go, and with much sorrow we part."

Miss Edgeworth writes: "We were a few days ago at a Bal d'Enfants; this you would translate 'a children's ball,' and so did we, till we were set right by the learned—not a single child was at the

CHARLOTTE EDGEWORTH

ball, and only half a dozen unmarried ladies: it is a ball given by mothers to their grown-up children. Charlotte appeared as usual to great advantage, and was much admired for her ease and unaffected manners. She danced one English country-dance with M. de Crillon, son of the Gibraltar Duke. When she stood up a gentleman came to me and exclaimed, 'Ah, mademoiselle, votre sœur va danser, nous attendons le moment où elle va paraître!' She appeared extremely well from not being anxious to appear at all."

"One evening," we are told, "a fashionable young man had been introduced to Charlotte, and was standing talking to her. She observed him, while he talked, giving little puffs at the floor, till at last, having blown all the dust away, down he dropped upon one knee. 'Voulez-vous danser, mademoiselle?'"

We fancy we see Charlotte, as she joined the dance, dressed in the classical fashion of that day; her closely clinging muslin gown, with its short waist and its skirt just reaching to the ankles; her hair dressed in a knot behind, and bound with a ribbon or a string of beads.

The narrow, clinging skirts had just come into vogue. Some ladies, we are told, actually damped their drapery to make it cling the closer. A fine lady in one of Miss Edgeworth's novels of this period, making her entrance into an artificial pagoda

at a grand gala, remarks: "None but belles without petticoats can enter here; fortunately I have but two, and Lady Langdale has but one."

It was in this same year (1802) that Fanny Burney (now Mme. d'Arblay) left England to settle with her husband and child in Paris. She describes, humorously, in her Diaries a French dressmaker's examination of her plain English attire.

"'*This* won't do!' exclaimed the *modiste*. '*That* you can never wear! *This* you can never be seen in! *That* would make you stared at as a curiosity!—*Three* petticoats! No one wears more than one!—Stays? Everybody has left off even corsets!—Shift-sleeves? Not a soul now wears even a chemise!' &c. &c. In short, . . . hopeless of success in exhibiting myself in the *costume français*, I gave over the attempt and ventured to come forth as a Gothic *Anglaise* who had never heard of, or never heeded, the reigning metamorphoses."

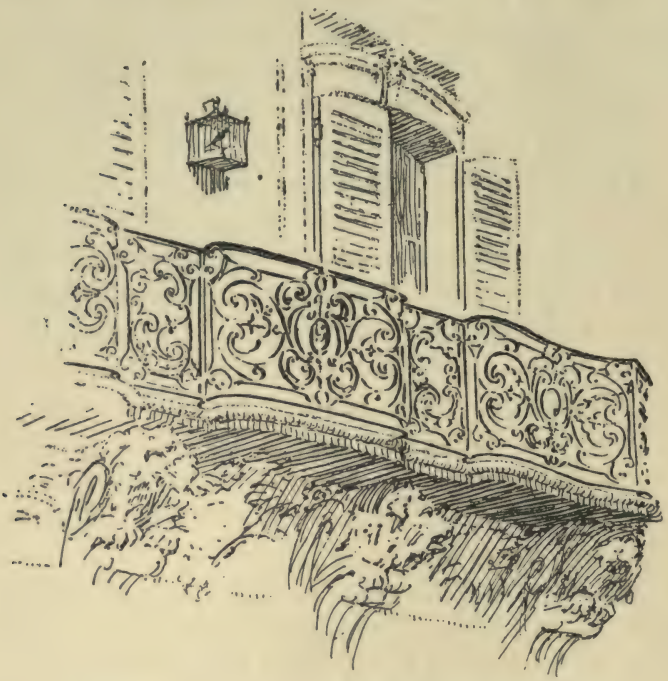
Another Englishwoman of note was visiting Paris at this time—Miss Berry. Writing of the fashions of the day as seen at a grand ball, she says: "The women were in general well dressed, all *coiffées en cheveux* with flowers, and all the young ones dressed in white trimmed with bunches of flowers. . . . Vestris was there; danced a quadrille which was composed of the very best dancers of society. . . . Vestris' figure was curious; his

coiffure was one of those bristling, frizzed and powdered heads that were worn about twenty years ago, and in dancing showers of powder came out of it, and it flapped up and down in the most ridiculous manner. He is still marvellous [however] and has movements that nobody else ever had. All the other men wore crops."

Powder, as we see, was thus going out of fashion, but rouge was still used. Miss Berry writes: "Went to Mdlle. Martin's to buy rouge. I thought from having heard all my life of the fame of Mdlle. Martin's rouge, that her receipt must, by this time, have descended to her great-grandchildren, *mais point du tout.* The original Mdlle. Martin herself, now a large, fat, old woman, with a very intelligent countenance, served us. She was dressed in a large bonnet, long powdered hair, the costume of twenty years ago."

Another English visitor, of whom we have already spoken—Mr. Sutton Sharpe (the elder)—endeavours to describe, from a man's point of view, the ladies' mode of dressing their hair. "The universal Fashion at present," he writes, "is to let the hair grow very long in front, and to let it hang over the forehead and cheeks in many curls or ringlets; each of these consisting of not more hairs than amount to the thickness of a piece of very thin pack-thread. The ringlets are not absolutely unbecoming, but far from elegant. After a little

while they lose their curl and give a very blousy appearance to the heads. . . . The ornament most



BALCONY ON A CORNER HOUSE OF THE RUE DE LILLE

fashionable and tasteful for the hair is a comb with a broad richly ornamented back."

Mrs. Edgeworth, writing to a relative on November 21, says: "Has Maria told you that she has had her "Belinda" translated into French, by the young Count de Ségur, an amiable young man of one of the

most ancient families of France, married to a granddaughter of the Chancellor d'Aguesseau?"

And Maria, herself, writes after meeting the father and mother of the young Count: "She is a beautiful grandmother, he a nobleman of the old school, who adds to agreeable manners a great deal of elegant literature." She goes on to mention Malouet, the amiable and able counsellor of the King. "We met him yesterday," she says; "a fine countenance and simple manners; he conversed freely with my father, not at all afraid of committing himself."

Mr. Edgeworth writes: "At Madame de Pastoret's we met M. Degerando and M. Camille Jordan. Not Camille Jourdan, the assassin, nor Camille Desmoulins, another assassin, nor General Jourdan, another assassin, but a young man of agreeable manners, gentle disposition and much information; he lives near Paris with his Pylades Degerando, who is also a man of much information. . . . Camille Jordan has written an admirably eloquent pamphlet on the choice of Buonaparte as first Consul for life; it was at first forbidden, but the Government wisely recollected that to forbid it is to excite curiosity. . . . M. de Prony, who is at the head of the Engineers des Ponts et Chaussées, was introduced to us by Mr. Watt."

"The title of philosopher," remarks Miss Edgeworth, "or rather of a man of letters or science, is

the best possible title here. We see the French savants mixing with most polite and elegant societies of both sexes; not only without being considered as heterogeneous beings, but as essential to the formation of *good* company."

Mr. Edgeworth speaks in one of his letters of their meeting the Abbé Morellet's niece, who had come many leagues to see them; also of their meeting Mme. de Vergennes, Mme. de Rémusat, and Mme. de Nansouty, "all people of knowledge and charming manners."

Mme. de Vergennes was the mother of both Mme. de Rémusat and Mme. de Nansouty. Mme. de Rémusat in her interesting *Mémoires* describes the charm of her mother's conversation. "I fancy I see her," she writes, "seated in the midst of us, busily engaged upon some piece of needlework for one of her daughters, enlivening our evenings by her talk, always piquant and full of variety; recounting a thousand amusing stories, in her own original way, or, on the other hand, animating the society [of her *salon*] by the discussion of some serious subject; in which, amidst a stream of bright and racy remarks, there shone forth, at times, reflexions of a truly profound nature, reflexions which, however, her native tact inspired her to clothe with *une sorte de couleur féminine*."

Mme. de Rémusat inherited, it seems, the more serious and philosophic side of her mother's

character, while Mme. de Nansouty was endowed with her gifts of imagination. These found a vent in her published poems.

Mrs. Edgeworth, writing in later years of Maria's intercourse with their interesting French friends, says: "She spoke French with so much ease and spirit, that her powers appeared as brilliant as if she was using her native language. One night when she had been very entertaining on turns of French expression . . . a lady exclaimed, 'Elle fait des calembours dans notre langue!'"

It might, indeed, have been remarked of Miss Edgeworth, as it was of a witty fellow-countryman of hers about to visit Paris at this same time, "Vous êtes fait pour plaire dans un salon français. Sans cesser d'être naturel vous serez très singulier et très original, ce qui est le suprème mérite pour une nation qui ne craint que le bâillement."

"Several of the old aristocracy," continues Mrs. Edgeworth, "were charmed by Maria's knowledge of old French classic literature, which brought out all their own best powers of conversation, and opened their hearts to tell her much of their adventures and misfortunes in the revolutionary days. Her ready sympathy and real interest . . . in what she was listening to, formed one of her special charms to those who were first struck by her wit and genius—it surprised French talkers to find her so able a listener."

In all her letters from Paris Maria dwells upon her happy intercourse with her intellectual friends, and certainly these were among the *élite* of Parisian society, but it is in individuals of less high endowments that amusing national characteristics appear; and Miss Edgeworth shows in her published works how closely she had studied such personages in France as well as in England and Ireland.

The patient and lovable Emilie de Coulanges, in the story that bears her name, like the de Pastorets and Delesserts, might have belonged to any nation, but her mother, the Comtesse de Coulanges, and their benefactress, Mrs. Somers, could not possibly be other than French and English. How characteristic of their nationalities are their quarrels and discussions! How Mrs. Somers fumes and frets as if under personal insult when Mme. la Comtesse ranks Racine far above "that bloody-minded barbarian Shakespeare"! How the Comtesse, "after pleading the cause of Racine, as if it were a matter of life and death, as if the fate of Europe or the universe depended upon it, would turn to discuss the merits of a riband with equal vehemence, or coolly observe that she was hoarse, and that she would quit Racine for a better thing—*de l'eau sucrée*"!

The Comtesse de Coulanges, however, with all her pride and her frivolities, is a lady of high breeding; in the tale of "Mdlle. Panache" we

have a vulgar Frenchwoman who imposes upon an English "fine lady," and becomes governess and companion to her daughter. The hero of the tale, a young Mr. Montague, calls the morning after a ball to pay his respects to this mother and and daughter.

"No one was ready for breakfast on his arrival, and he spent an hour alone in the breakfast-room. At length the silence was interrupted by a shrill female voice, which, as it approached nearer, he perceived to be the voice of a foreigner, half suffocated with ineffectual desire to make her anger intelligible. He could only distinguish the words, 'I ring, ring, ring, ay, twenty time, and nobody mind my bell nor me more dan noting at all.' With a violent push the breakfast-room door flew open, and Mdlle. Panache, little expecting to find anybody there, entered volubly, repeating, 'Dey let me ring, ring, ring!'

"Surprised at the sight of a gentleman, and a young gentleman, she repented having been so loud in her anger." However, she supposes that he may be merely an apothecary who had been sent for, and therefore remarks, "Miladi is not visible yet, sir. Does she know are you here?"

"I hope not, ma'am; for I should be very sorry that she were to be disturbed, after sitting up so late last night."

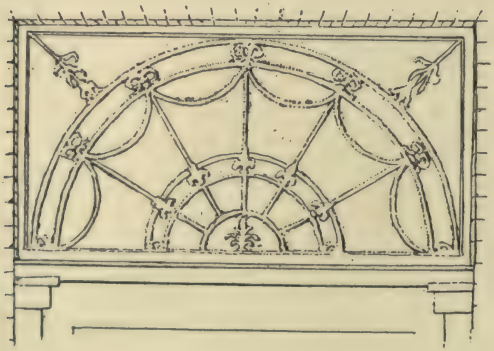
"O dat will do her no harm, for I gave her,

pardonnez, some excellent white wine whey out of my own head last night when she got into her bed. I hope you don't make no objections to white wine whey, sir?"

"I?—not in the least, ma'am."

This talk at cross-purposes continues till the family and their guests enter the room, when Mdlle. Panache, joining in the conversation, exclaims, "Je n'aime pas les prudes, moi."

"*Dignité?* Oh, I don't say noting against *dignité*, neider; not but I tink de English reserve is *de trop*. I tink a lady of a certain rank has always good *principes* enough to be sure, and as to the rest, *qu'importe?*—dat's my notions."



CHAPTER VI

THE GRAND REVIEW

Mrs. Edgeworth says in one of her letters: "We paid a short visit to the pictures and saw the Salle du Tribunat and the Consul's apartments at the Tuileries; on the dressing-table there were the busts of Fox and Nelson."

Miss Berry also visited the Consul's apartments a few months earlier. After observing that they were not usually shown to the public, she remarks: "It is well they are not. *Republican simplicity* might well be excused for being startled at such magnificence. I have formerly seen Versailles, and I have seen the Little Trianon, and I have seen many palaces in other countries, but I never saw anything surpassing the magnificence of this."

Miss Berry gives a detailed description of the costly inlaid furniture and rich hangings of the various rooms. "In a *salon* hung with blue-lilac lustring embroidered in the honeysuckle pattern," she says, "is the beautiful St. Cecilia with a turban,

playing upon the harp, by Domenichino—I think—taken from the Borghese Palace." She also mentions numerous silken-draped mirrors, beneath which stood porphyry and other fine marble tables, bearing magnificent Sèvres vases and elegant candelabra.

Maria Edgeworth writes in December (1802): "We saw the grand Review the day before yesterday from a window that looked out on the court of the Louvre and Place du Carrousel. Buonaparte rode down the lines on a fine white Spanish horse. Took off his hat to salute various generals, and gave us a full view of his pale, thin, woebegone countenance. He is very little, but much at ease on horseback: it is said he never appears to so much advantage as on horseback. There were about six thousand troops, a fine show, well appointed, and some, but not all, well mounted. On those who had distinguished themselves in the battle of Marengo all eyes were fixed."

Madame d'Arblay, who also witnessed a review in the Place du Carrousel a few months earlier, writes:

"Buonaparte, mounting a beautiful and spirited white horse, closely encircled by his glittering *aides-de-camp*, and accompanied by his generals, rode round the ranks, holding his bridle indifferently in either hand, and seeming utterly careless of the prancing, rearing, or other freaks of his horse, insomuch as to strike some who were

Meissonier

NAPOLEON

near me with a notion of his being a bad horseman. I am the last to be a *judge*, upon this subject; but as a *remarker*, he only appeared to me a man who knew so well he could manage the animal when he pleased, that he did not deem it worth his while to keep constantly in order what he knew, if urged or provoked, he could subdue in a moment.

"Precisely opposite to the window at which I was placed the Chief Consul stationed himself after making his round; and thence he presented some swords of honour, spreading out one arm with an air . . . that was highly military and commanding. Just as the consular band, with their brazen drums, as well as trumpets, marched facing the First Consul, the sun broke suddenly out from the clouds which had obscured it all the morning; and the effect was so abrupt and so dazzling that I could not help observing it to my [neighbour], who, eyeing me with great surprise, not unmixed with the compassion of contempt, said:

"'Est-ce que vous ne savez pas cela, madame? Dès que le Premier Consul vient à la parade, le soleil vient aussi!'

"I apologised for my ignorance; but doubt whether it was forgiven."

To return to Miss Edgeworth's narrative. "Mr. Knox," she writes, "who was presented to Buonaparte, and who saw all the wonderful pre-

sentations, says that it was a muddled business, all the world received in a very small room. Buonaparte spoke more to officers than to any one else. [He] affected to be gracious to the English, [and] said, 'L'Angleterre est une grande nation, *aussi bien* que la France, il faut que nous soyons amis!' Great men's words, like little men's dreams, are sometimes to be interpreted by the rule of contraries."

Charlotte Edgeworth, writing home on December 8, remarks: "The Review is, as you see by the papers, over, and my father has not spoken to the great man—no, he did not wish it. All our distant friends will be, I am afraid, disappointed; but some here think that my father's refusal to be presented to him shows a proper pride. All the reasons for this mode of conduct will serve perhaps for debate, certainly for conversation when we return."

The hopes of the Liberal party in England, to which the Edgeworths as a family belonged, had been high when Buonaparte first began his career and posed as the liberator of all the nations that were suffering from tyranny and oppression, but a nearer view of his personal character and methods of government had undeceived Mr. Edgeworth; hence his determination not to pay court to him.

Among the Edgeworth MSS. there is a letter from a Mr. Merry, secretary to Lord Whitworth,

the English Ambassador, dated December 3, 1802, proposing to take measures for Mr. Edgeworth's presentation to the First Consul; also Mr. Edgeworth's letter in reply.

The latter runs as follows:

"Mr. Edgeworth presents his compliments to Mr. Merry. He is flattered and obliged by Mr. M.'s attentions.

"The wish of being introduced to the First Consul upon his arrival at Paris has since that time so far subsided that he will not give Mr. Merry any further trouble on that subject.

"*Dec.* 3."

"On the 27th January"* (1803), writes Mrs. Edgeworth, "Mr. Edgeworth received a peremptory order from the French Government to quit Paris immediately. He went with Maria to the village of Passy. Our friend Madame Gautier generously offered to him the use of her house there, but he would not compromise her. M. de Pastoret and M. Delessert visited him the next morning, fearless of Buonaparte and his orders."

The official document containing this command of banishment still exists among the Edgeworth

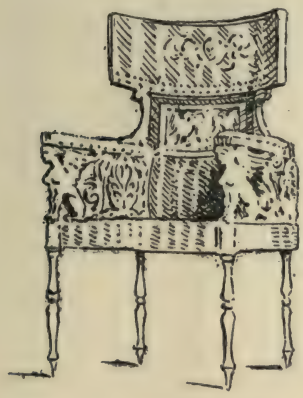
* This date should have been the 22nd. It is probably a printer's error.

relics, and is at the present time in our hands. In it Mr. Edgeworth is enjoined to quit Paris in twenty-four hours and France within a fortnight. The document bears the insignia of the Republic, and is dated "Paris, le premier Pluviose, an onze de la République."

Lord Whitworth, in his despatches to the British Government, gives a detailed account of this "act of rigour perpetrated by the First Consul against one of his Majesty's subjects," and says he has written to M. de Talleyrand for an explanation. In the meantime, he says he has learnt that "Mr. Edgeworth had discovered that the crime of which he was accused was that of being brother to the Abbé Edgeworth, that respectable ecclesiastic who attended Louis XVI. in his last moments."

Mr. Edgeworth was not the brother, but only a cousin of the Abbé's; but he informed Lord Whitworth that he "would never deny or give up the honour of being related to him." Mr. Edgeworth was then required by the Consular authorities to send in a humble petition to the First Consul for his release from banishment, stating at the same time his exact relationship to the Abbé. This he refused to do; "but he is ready," writes the Ambassador, "to sign a declaration [of the relationship], and this I have no doubt will be sufficient to procure his return, since they must be ashamed of so unprovoked an act of violence."

This proved to be the case, and Mr. Edgeworth, accompanied by his friends, M. Pictet and M. Le Breton, who had brought him the news of the remission of his sentence, returned to Paris.



CHAPTER VII

PENELOPE AND CALYPSO

THE following letter of Miss Edgeworth's was written to her aunt Miss Mary Sneyd shortly before the events just recorded took place:

"PARIS, *Jan.* 10*th*, 1803.
"*Siècle réparateur*, as Monge has christened this century.

"I will give you a journal of yesterday; I know you love journals. Got up and put on our shoes and stockings and cambric muslin gowns, which are in high esteem here, fur tippets and *fur-clogs* —God bless Aunt Mary and Aunt Charlotte for them—and were in coach by nine o'clock. Drove to the excellent Abbé Morellet's, where we were invited to breakfast to meet Madame d'Ouditot,* the lady who inspired Rousseau with the idea of Julie.†

"Julie is now seventy-two years of age, a thin woman in a little black bonnet. She appeared to

* This name is usually spelt d'Houditot.
† The heroine in the "Nouvelle Héloïse."

me shockingly ugly; she squints so much that it is impossible to tell which way she is looking; but no sooner did I hear her speak than I began to like her, and no sooner was I seated beside her than I began to find in her countenance a most benevolent and agreeable expression. She entered into conversation immediately; her manner invited and could not fail to obtain confidence. She seems as gay and open-hearted as a girl of fifteen. . . . She is possessed of that art which Lord Kaimes said he would prefer to the finest gift from the queen of the fairies—the art of seizing the best side of every object. She has had great misfortunes, but she has still retained the power of making herself and her friends happy. Even during the horrors of the Revolution, if she met with a flower, a butterfly, an agreeable smell, a pretty colour, she would turn her attention to these, and for the moment suspend her sense of misery, not from frivolity, but from real philosophy. No one has exerted themselves with more energy in the service of their friends. I felt in her company the delightful influence of a cheerful temper and soft, attractive manners—enthusiasm which age cannot extinguish, and which spends, but does not waste itself, on small but not trifling objects."

This description of Mme. d'Houditot is in keeping with all that we read of her.

Her cousin and contemporary, Mme. d'Epinay,

writing of her in her youth, exclaims: "Oh, what a lovely soul is hers, so naïve, so sensible, so honest!" And a writer of our own time speaks of her "perennial freshness of feeling that never changed," and of "that winning charm of *la jeunesse morale* which caused her to be loved throughout the whole course of her life."

Rousseau, addressing his Julie in the "Nouvelle Héloïse," writes: "It is this touching combination of keen sensibility with an unchanging sweetness of disposition, this tender pity for the sorrows of others, this rectitude of mind united with an exquisite taste for all that is lovely, whose pure source lies deep within the soul; in one word, it is the charms of mind and of heart rather than those of the outward form that I worship in you. I admit that it is possible to imagine you more beautiful than you are, but more lovable, more worthy the heart of a good man, no, Julie, *that* is impossible!"

Rousseau's love for the original of "Julie," tempered as it was by his veneration for her character, is described by him in his "Confessions" as "le premier et l'unique en toute ma vie."

"Once at a dinner at Mme. d'Ouditot's," writes Miss Edgeworth, "there was a fine pyramid of fruit. Rousseau, in helping himself, took the peach which formed the base of the pyramid, and the rest fell immediately. 'Rousseau,' said she,

'that is what you always do with all our systems: you pull down with a single touch, but who will build up what you pull down?'"

Mrs. Edgeworth writes on February 22: "Last Thursday, *jeudi gras*, we dined at two, and were at St. Germain at six, at Madame Campan's, where we had been invited to see some plays acted by her pupils. The little theatre appeared already full when we entered. We stood a few seconds near the door, when Madame Campan cried out from above: 'Placez Madame Edgeworth, faites monter Madame et sa compagnie.' So we went up to the gallery, where we had very good places next to a Polish Princess and half a dozen of her countrywomen, who are all polite and well-bred. The crowd increased, many more than there was room for. The famous Madame Visconti and Lady Yarmouth sat behind us, Lady Elizabeth Foster and Lady Bessborough not far from us, and below, [among] a number of English, the Duchess of Gordon and her beautiful daughter, Lady Georgiana. Madame Louis Buonaparte, who had been one of Madame Campan's *élèves*, was the principal Frenchwoman."

This lady, known as Hortense de Beauharnais, daughter of Josephine by her first husband, had been recently married to the First Consul's brother, Louis. She was then nineteen years of age. "Her face," we are told, "framed in her fair

curling hair, had the freshness of a flower." In character she was both gentle and gay; "parfaitement bonne," a friend describes her.

Maria herself continues the description of the dramatic entertainment in a letter addressed to her aunt Miss Mary Sneyd, "The play was Racine's *Esther*," she writes, "and it interested me the next day to read Madame de Sévigné's account of its representation by the young ladies of St. Cyr, under the patronage of Madame de Maintenon."

This performance took place in the month of February 1689. "The drama," writes Mme. de Sévigné, "consists of a combination of [instrumental] music, of poetry, of songs and of characters so perfect and so complete that nothing is left to the imagination to desire. . . . All is simple, all is innocent, all is alike sublime and touching."

"Madame de Genlis's beautiful *Rosière de Salency*," proceeds Miss Edgeworth, "was acted after *Esther*, and the scene where the mother denounces her daughter and pushes her from her, was so admirably written and so admirably played, that it made me forget the stage, the actors, and the spectators—I could not help thinking it real.

"Full of the pleasure I had received from the *Rosière de Salency*," continues the writer, "I was impatient to pay a visit to Madame de Genlis,

who had written to say she would be glad to be personally acquainted with Mr. and Miss Edgeworth. She lives—where do you think?—where Sully used to live at the Arsenal. Buonaparte has given her apartments there."

The Arsenal stands, as the reader may remember, beyond the Place de la Bastille, an ill-lighted and dreary region in 1803. Its vast buildings are divided by innumerable court-yards, and it was long before the Edgeworths could discover the block in which were the apartments of Mme. de Genlis. At last a surly porter, candle in hand, led the way up a dark staircase, and, pointing to a recess, exclaimed, "Allez, voilà la porte, et tirez la sonnette." "He and his candle went down," writes Maria, "and my father had but just time to seize the handle of the bell when we were again in darkness. Presently footsteps were heard approaching, and the door was opened by a young girl who held a wavering candle in her hand. . . . After surveying us, and hearing that our name was Edgeworth, she smiled graciously, and bid us follow her, saying, 'Maman est chez elle.'

"She led us into a small room, in which the candles were so well screened by a green tin screen that we could scarcely distinguish the tall form of a lady in black, who rose from her arm-chair by the fireside as the door opened: a great puff of smoke issuing from the huge fireplace at the same

moment. She came forward, and we made our way towards her as well as we could, through a confusion of tables, chairs and work-baskets, china, writing-desks and ink-stands, bird-cages and a harp. She did not speak, and as her back was now turned to both fire and candle, I could not see her face, or anything but the outline of her form, and her attitude; her form was the remains of a fine form, and her attitude that of a woman used to a better drawing-room. I, being foremost, and she silent, was compelled to speak to this figure in darkness . . . she replied by taking my hand and saying something in which *charmée* was the most intelligible word. Whilst she spoke she looked over my shoulder at my father, whose bow I presume told her he was a gentleman, for she spoke to him immediately as if she wished to please, and seated us in fauteuils near the fire.

"I then had a full view of her face and figure: . . . dark eyes, long sallow cheeks, compressed thin lips, two or three black ringlets on a high forehead . . . altogether an appearance of fallen fortunes, worn-out health, and excessive but guarded irritability. To me there was nothing of that engaging, captivating manner which I had been taught to expect by many even of her enemies; she seemed to me to be alive only to literary quarrels and jealousies; the muscles of her face as she spoke, or as my father spoke to her, quickly and too easily expressed

hatred and anger whenever any not of her own party were mentioned. . . .

"She spoke of Madame de Staël's 'Delphine' with detestation, of another new and fashionable novel, 'Amélie,' with abhorrence, and kissed my forehead twice because I had not read it. 'Vous autres Anglaises vous êtes modestes!' Where was Madame de Genlis's sense of delicacy when she penned and published 'Les Chevaliers du Cygne'? Forgive me, my dear Aunt Mary," continues Maria; "you begged me to see her with favourable eyes, and I went . . . with the most favourable disposition, but I could not like her; there was something of malignity in her countenance and conversation that repelled love, and of hypocrisy which annihilated esteem, and from time to time I saw, or thought I saw, through the gloom of her countenance a gleam of coquetry. . . . I never met any one of any party who was her friend; this strikes me with real melancholy; to see a woman of the first talents in Europe, who lived and has shone in the gay court of the gayest nation in the world, now deserted and forlorn . . . without society, without a single friend, admired—and despised."

Perhaps it may interest the reader to learn that Mme. d'Arblay's opinion of Mme. de Genlis coincided with that of Miss Edgeworth.

At the foot of an effusive letter addressed to her (as Fanny Burney) by this lady in July 1785,

Mme. d'Arblay wrote in later years the following words:

"N.B.—This note is from the celebrated Mme. la Cesse. de Genlis, written upon her first visit to England, when, warmly and with predetermined partiality, she sought the acquaintance and friendship of F. B., and she obtained them with the most ardent admiration of her talents and a zest yet greater for her engaging society and elegantly lively and winning manners—mais hélas! *après! après!* . . . In France F. d'A. was compelled to keep aloof—tho' most reluctantly."

CHAPTER VIII

A FLIGHT

WHILE the events recorded by Miss Edgeworth in her last two letters were taking place ominous rumours were becoming prevalent of war breaking out afresh with England. Buonaparte's power on the Continent had been rapidly increasing and he knew well that England was the sole bar to his ambitious schemes. He had already, upon various pretexts, annexed both Piedmont and the Duchy of Parma to France; he had overthrown the constitution of Switzerland, and now reigned supreme there under the title of "Mediator"; while, contrary to the express conditions of the Treaty of Amiens, his troops still occupied Holland.

It soon became known in England that the building of French warships was being carried on to a large extent. They were nominally designed for the protection of the French colonies; but George III., in a message to Parliament, sent early in March, adverted to the necessity of our being

prepared for an attack, and it was resolved to call out the Militia and augment the naval force. A report of this message excited the high indignation of the First Consul.

Lord Whitworth, in a despatch to Lord Hawkesbury, writes:

"At the Court which was held at the Tuileries (yesterday), and the which I attended, the First Consul accosted me evidently under very considerable agitation. He began by asking me if I had any news from England. I told him that I had received letters from your Lordship two days ago. He immediately said, 'So you are determined to go to war?'

"'No, Premier Consul,' I replied, 'we are too sensible of the advantages of peace.'

"'Nous avons déjà fait la guerre pendant quinze ans.'

"As he seemed to wait for an answer, I observed only, 'C'en est déjà trop.'

"'Mais,' said he, 'vous voulez la faire encore quinze années et vous m'y forcez.'

"I told him that was very far from his Majesty's intentions. He then proceeded to Count Marcoff and the Chevalier d'Azzara, who were standing together at a little distance from me, and said to them: 'Les Anglais veulent la guerre, mais s'ils sont les premiers à tirer l'épée, je serai le dernier à la remettre. Ils ne respectent pas les traités. . . .

Thos. Lawrence

LORD WHITWORTH

Malheur a ceux qui ne respectent pas les traités! Ils en sont responsables à toute l'Europe!'

"He was too agitated to make it advisable to prolong the conversation. I therefore made no answer, and he retired to his apartment repeating the last phrase.

"It is to be remarked," continues Lord Whitworth, "that all this passed loud enough to be overheard by two hundred people who were present. I was fortunate enough," he adds, "not to be betrayed into anything imprudent, or which could be misconstrued. I am persuaded that there was not a single person who did not feel the extreme impropriety of his conduct and the total want of dignity, as well as of decency, on the occasion."

Even M. Thiers admits this in his grandiloquent description of the foregoing scene. "The eyes of Buonaparte," he remarks, "were flashing frightful as power when enraged, but destitute of the calm dignity which becomes it so well. He took a sort of pleasure in making the thunders of his wrath reverberate to the extremities of the earth."

To return to the Edgeworths.

The belief in an approaching war with England gaining ground, and many of their friends giving credence to this belief, Mr. Edgeworth considered it advisable for his family to quit Paris.

"He decided to set out immediately," writes

Mrs. Edgeworth, "and we began to pack up. Other friends contradicted this fear . . . and the hope that the rumours of war were unfounded, made us suspend our packing. M. Le Breton called, and said he was sure of knowing before that evening the truth as to Buonaparte's warlike intentions, and that if Mr. Edgeworth met him at a friend's that night, he would know by his suddenly putting on his hat that war was imminent. M. Le Breton was unable to visit us again, and afraid, if he wrote, that his letter might be intercepted. Still more was he afraid of being overheard if he said anything at the party where they were to meet.

"Mr. Edgeworth went [to the friend's house] and saw M. Le Breton, who did suddenly put on his hat, and on Mr. Edgeworth's return to us he said we must go.

"The next day was spent in taking leave of our kind friends, from whom we found it so painful to part, and who expressed so much regret at losing us, and so much doubt as to the probability of war that Mr. Edgeworth promised that if, on his arrival in London, his Paris friends wrote to say 'Peace,' he would return to them, and bring over the rest of his family from Ireland for a year's residence."

Maria writes to her aunt Mrs. Mary Sneyd on their arrival at Calais, on March 4: "At last, my dear Aunt Mary, we have actually left Paris.

Perhaps we may be detained here for some days, as the wind is directly against us; but we have no reason to lament as we are in Grandsire's excellent house, and have books and thoughts enough to occupy us. Thoughts of friends from whom we have parted, and of friends to whom we are going. How few people in this world are so rich in friends!"

In a farewell letter to Mme. de Pastoret she says: "I am afraid that we return to our own country with too strong a taste for the elegance and *facility* of French society. We are not, I hope, by any means inclined to give ourselves travellers' airs; but without affectation we may sometimes be *forced* to make comparisons highly advantageous to the manners and politeness of our Parisian friends." *

The next letter is addressed to a relative:

"DOVER, *March* 6.

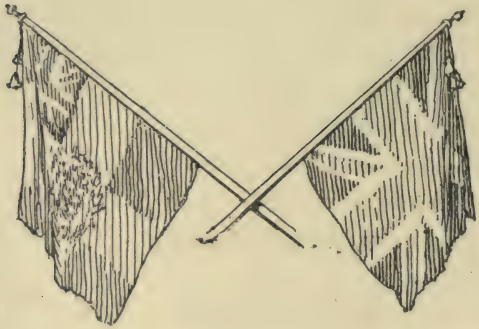
"All alive and merry: just landed after a fine passage of six hours."

Mrs. Edgeworth narrates:

"On our arrival in London we found the expected letter from M. Le Breton. It had been agreed that if there was to be peace, he was to conclude

* From an unpublished letter in the possession of Mr. Bernard Quaritch.

his letter with 'Mes hommages à la charmante Mademoiselle Charlotte'; if war, the *charmante* was to be omitted. He ended his letter, which made not the smallest allusion to politics or public events, with 'Mes hommages à Mademoiselle Charlotte,' and we set out for Edinburgh."



CHAPTER IX

THE UPRISING OF A NATION

Lord Whitworth, in a despatch dated April 14 (1803) writes:

"It is certain that hitherto the First Consul has resisted everything and everybody; but still those who have undertaken the task of reducing him to reason will not abandon it, and I think we may still hope."

As time went on, however, the temper of Buonaparte, "for it was by that alone that he was influenced," as the Ambassador remarks, did not improve. He was deaf to all arguments in favour of peace upon honourable terms for England, and on the evening of May 12 Lord Whitworth quitted the French capital. In his last despatch from Paris, written on that same evening at eight o'clock, he says:

"I shall set off in half an hour; and if they have any proposal to make they must send it after me. I confess I am not so sanguine. I shall in all probability be at Calais on Sunday, and I hope to

find the packets ready to take me over immediately."

Lord Whitworth was not mistaken; no proposal came to delay his journey, and at the same time that he was embarking for Dover the French Ambassador, General Andréassy, who had quitted London, was embarking for Calais.

Thus England and France were once more at war with each other.

In the *Times* of May 30 (1803), we read:

"Accounts have been received in Town that the First Consul has issued a Decree ordering that all the English who are now in France above the age of eighteen (excepting females) shall be made prisoners-of-war. . . . Not fewer than 100 persons have been confined at Calais; among whom are Sir James Crawford, Mr. Cobourn, and Lord Yarmouth."

Morning Post, May 30.—"The English gentlemen in Paris have been sent to the Temple, the Conciergerie and the other prisons: the ladies have been sent to Fontainebleau. Mr. Talbot, Lord Whitworth's secretary, is among those who are under confinement; and all the effects, the rich furniture his Lordship left behind, are seized."

Times, May 31.—"The infamous measure in question is evidently the act of Buonaparte, and of Buonaparte only! There is not a Minister he has

to consult, or rather to command, who could have advised it."

A writer in the *Morning Chronicle* can hardly give credence to such arbitrary proceedings—proceedings which would "set at nought the sacred laws of hospitality, respected even by barbarians." "If," says he, "they *have* been committed, it must be manifest to all that the First Consul of France has survived his reason."

In the meantime extensive preparations were being made all along the northern coast of France for the invasion of England, a project which had taken a strong possession of the mind of Buonaparte. Mme. de Staël writes in her *Dix Années d'Exile:* "Flat-bottomed boats were ordered to be built from one end of France to the other. They were constructed in the forests on the borders of the great roads. . . . In Picardy a triumphal arch was erected, bearing these words: 'The road to London.'" "Let us be masters of the Channel for six hours," was Buonaparte's boast, "and we are masters of the world!"

At a grand military dinner given in Calais, at which the First Consul was present, the following toasts were drunk: "To the health of the first Quarter-master who shall quarter his troops at Dover," and "To the speedy review of the French Guards in St. James's Park."

The newspapers of the day reflect vividly the

wide-spread feelings of indignation and of patriotism aroused by these proceedings. A writer in the *Morning Post* of July 4 says: "23,000 volunteers are actually embodied in Scotland, in battalions of from 300 to 800 men each, exclusive of cavalry. These occupy different parts of the coast which may be supposed the most vulnerable from Orkney to the Tweed."

"There are at this time in Devonshire," he continues, "sixteen complete troops of yeomanry cavalry, eight of which have been raised since the renewal of the war."

We read in the *Mirror of the Times* of July 23: "The Noblemen and Gentlemen of the metropolis have resolved to form themselves into a corps of cavalry, and to hold themselves in readiness to set off at an hour's notice to any part of the coast the enemy may attack."

Tidings of the enemy's movements was conveyed across country by means of the old signal-telegraph apparatus. Its wooden arms communicated the messages as they arrived from hill-top to hill-top until they finally reached the roof of the Admiralty at Whitehall.

In the *Morning Chronicle* of July 20 we read: "Yesterday a meeting of the Subscribers to Lloyd's Coffee-house took place, at which a splendid subscription was opened for granting relief to the relatives of those who may fall in the present con-

test. In a very short time upwards of £50,000 was subscribed."

"At a meeting held at Greenwich for the establishment of a voluntary corps, a veteran General attended who had served before Quebec. He was brought to the assembly in a chair and made an harangue, concluding with an observation that, though he was now unable to wield his sword he could contribute his purse. He subscribed £50."

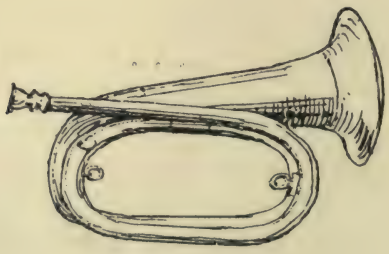
A writer in the *St. James's Gazette* of July 26 remarks: "The spirit of patriotism has risen in every part of the kingdom to a degree of enthusiasm altogether unparalleled. In the metropolis the theatres, the caricature-shops, the ballad-singers are all up in arms against the French Invasion and Buonaparte. Every piece of wall, where a placard can be posted up, exhibits a complete covering of loyal exhortations to the friends of Old England. The Exchange, the Bank, the counting-houses seem all filled with armed men. . . . Among a people so animated and so united, what is to be feared?"

A wise writer in the *Morning Post* gives a word of warning to those who may be overconfident.

"The exertions of the Government and of the people," he says, "cannot be too vigorous. The time is at hand when their strength will be put to the trial. . . . The Navy of England is the bravest and greatest that ever rode the ocean . . . but it

cannot work miracles. Whatever depends on the winds and waves must be matter of chance. There is not, there never was, there never will be, there never can be, any safety for the people of England but in their own right arms. They are lost if they do not act as if *there were a bridge from Calais to Dover.* If there were, England could not be conquered unless her people were as base cowards as the Tyrant dares to call them.

" When a burning love of their country and a just, profound and permanent detestation of those who have sworn her destruction are kindled in every British heart, then the regular troops will only be our advanced guard. An armed nation full of the unconquerable enthusiasm of patriotic zeal, will be the main body. Then and not till then, will this empire be safe."



CHAPTER X

A PRISONER-OF-WAR

MME. DE STAËL writes in her *Dix Années d'Exile:* "I was at Geneva living . . . in the society of the English when the news of the declaration of war reached us. The rumour immediately spread that the English travellers would all be made prisoners, but, as nothing similar had ever been heard of in the law of European nations, I gave no credit to it, and my security was nearly proving injurious to my friends. . . . Persons entirely unconnected with political affairs—some of them repairing to different universities for education, others to the South for the recovery of their health, were arrested . . . all to gratify the spleen of the tyrant against the invincible nation to which they belong."

Among these unfortunate English travellers was Mr. Edgeworth's eldest son Lovell, a young man of about twenty-five years of age who had been spending some weeks in Geneva. On the first rumours that war with England was imminent,

Mr. Edgeworth wrote to warn him of his danger, but the letter miscarried, and Lovell fell a victim to Buonaparte's Decree.

There is a letter among the Edgeworth MSS., written by Lovell upon his arrival at the Fortress of Verdun, whither he and some other prisoners from Geneva had been conducted. It is addressed to a gentleman named Phillips, and our researches have led to the discovery that this gentleman must have been Captain Molesworth Phillips, the brother-in-law of Mme. d'Arblay (Fanny Burney). He and his family, like Lovell, were travelling on the Continent at this time and were made prisoners; though Phillips ultimately obtained their liberty through the intervention of Talleyrand, who had received much hospitality from Phillips when an *émigré* during the Reign of Terror:

Lovell's letter is as follows:

"VERDUN, *August* 14, 1803.

"MY DEAR PHILLIPS,

"I have this morning received your kind letter from Stutgard for which I thank you a thousand times as it first gave me the account of the departure of Meagre Stone from Geneva. I hope I shall soon have a full account of the whole transaction. As I suppose you have no account of me, nor of my fellow-prisoners, I shall give you a short summary of our proceedings. After one of the most tedious

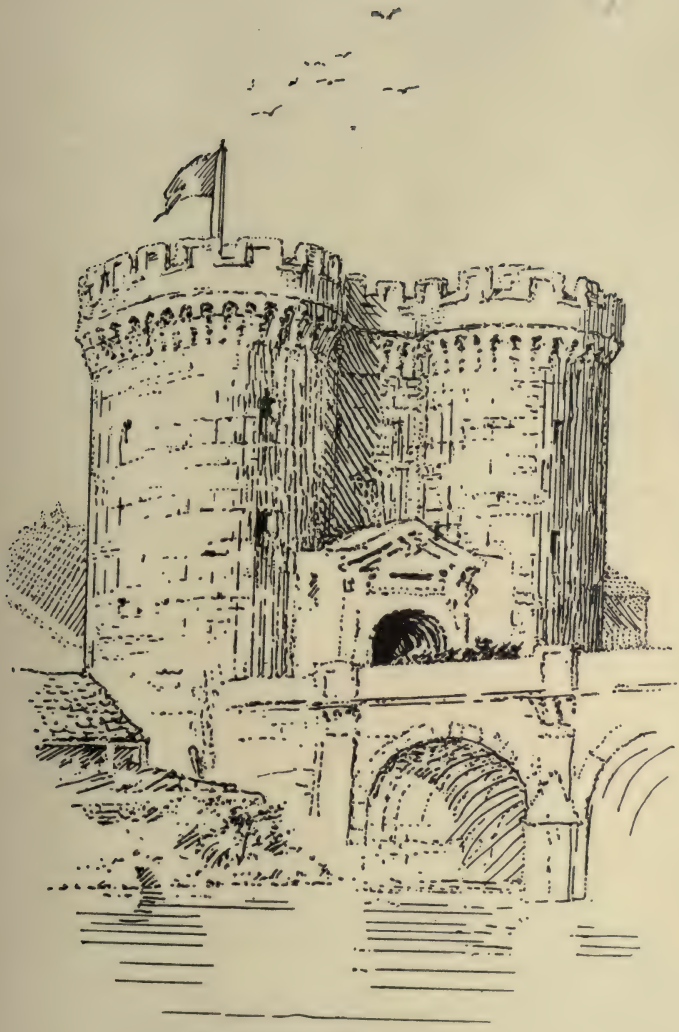
LOVELL EDGEWORTH

journeys of eleven days, through a heat generally of 90°, we at last got to this abominable hole—never shall I forget the first view which we had of this place. We had gone through a very pleasing, fertile and picturesque country when suddenly on Wednesday the 3rd at seven o'clock in the evening we came to the top of a hill, and looked down upon the most dismal country you ever beheld. Below was a flat bog, through which crept the Meuse, more like a nasty ditch than a river. Beyond were uncultivated wilds as far as eye could reach, with scarcely a tree or a bush to be seen. From the bog rose a small hill on which we saw the Cathedral of Verdun. The greatest part of the town lies by the side of the river which divides into a thousand different branches and has the appearance of dykes and ditches, and makes the whole place one of the dampest you ever beheld. It seems as if the Genius of Ague had made this his residence. We entered the town under archways, over drawbridges, by bastions, in short the most tremendous fortifications you can conceive. We came in, however, singing God save the King. We stopt at the best Inn in the town, and such a best!! Completely filled with vermin; though good eating; and an excellent bottle of champain made us, for a while, forget our woes. We searched for lodgings and have found tolerable. Dendy and Maude live together in a large house which we call the Palace, and are as melancholy

as people in palaces generally are. Mr. Percy has a small house built between the two ditches called the Cottage, as damp as it possibly can be. I was to have lived with him but I fear the damp and the expense; as I thought he would live on a dearer plan than I should. Old Packington has a small room, 6 feet square. His sole consolation is swearing, and drinking weak brandy and water. As for poor me, I have a small house with a little garden to it by the side of the river, where my sole amusement is in catching flies, and Williams in fishing for little animals which are called Perch in this country, that are about the length of one's finger. Such is our situation—no sort of society in the town. The Com$^{r.}$ is an old gruff soldier with one arm who tells his mind pretty roundly, I like him, however, better than our Genevese scoundrel. He lets us walk out of the town, but what good does that do, for what can we go out for to see but the reeds shaken by the wind? There are two other English here that were sent from Lyons, but no others. We have had parties of sailors marching through from Calais and that coast to be sent to Metz or Luneville. We have the prospect of the most dreary winter in this damp d—d hole that can be conceived. Farewell, remember us to your Brother and believe me to remain

"Yours sincerely,

"Lovell Edgeworth."



THE WATER-GATE, VERDUN

The foregoing is the only letter extant that Lovell wrote from Verdun. But we are able to give the reader some account of the prisoners' life in that dreary place from another source.

Among the "parties of sailors" brought as prisoners-of-war to Verdun, there was a certain young midshipman named Edward Boys (afterwards Captain Boys, R.N.). It is from his "Narrative of a Captivity, Escape and Adventures," a true sailor's book, simple, sincere and full of humour, that we get a picture of that life.*

Boys had been serving on board H.M.S. *Phœbe*, which was on its way to join Nelson (then off the coast of Catalonia) when the ship had a skirmish with four French frigates off Toulon. The *Phœbe* escaped but Boys and two other midshipmen who had been sent out in boats with some sailors for a night attack, were captured and taken on board the *Rhin*, a French warship.

"The following day," writes Boys, "we were separately examined before officers, and our refusal to answer questions respecting the strength and situation of Lord Nelson, was construed into contempt, and so excited the rage of the captain of the *Rhin* that he told us we were pirates!"

This captain, Boys tells us, had formerly been a

* It was from this book, it seems, that Captain Marryatt took many of the adventures introduced into "Midshipman Easy."

barber and had obtained his command of a frigate during the Revolution. He was totally ignorant of the official position held by English midshipmen, but he was, at last, made to understand that they were acting under the orders of superior officers.

The writer describes vividly the hardships that he and his companions encountered during their long march across country to Verdun, where they were entirely at the mercy of brutal men who, like this "august barber" as Boys calls him, had been brought into prominence by the Revolution and who openly boasted of their grim deeds during the Reign of Terror.

At last, on the morning of January 21, 1804, the captives reached Verdun. "We were escorted to its citadel," writes Boys. . . . "I found about 400 English [in the place] and a constant influx [continued] for several days."

"The command of the *détenus*," he continues, "was entrusted to a man named Wirion, who had been an adroit police officer, but had risen during the Revolution to the rank of general of gendarmerie. No sooner had this man entered upon his new office, than he established a system of espionage in imitation of the police of the whole republic. It was computed that he had no less than fifty principal informers, on whom he could depend, and each of these had one or more subordinate reporters . . .

many of them also employed the tradesmen, women and servants to collect their gleanings.

"Had Buonaparte carefully searched his army list, he could not have found two men less calculated to preside over a body of gentlemen than this General Wirion and the Commandant Courcelles; the only distinction between them being that to the depravity of an unprincipled, rapacious tyrant, the latter added the malice and manners of a ruffian."

A system of fines and enforced *douceurs* greatly reduced the small pay allotted to the prisoners; while a gaming-table, in which the General had "a large share of the profits, was a constant allurement to iniquity for the unwary and inebriated."

The privilege of ranging six miles from Verdun was obtained by payment of a *douceur*, the return to town being enjoined by the firing of a gun.

"Four of us were rambling about the country," writes Boys, "with a pointer and a silken net, when the signal-gun was fired; on our return, in passing through the village of Tierville, about two miles from Verdun, we were surprised by two gendarmes, one of whom instantly dismounted and seized me, uttering the most blasphemous epithets. He tied my elbows behind me, then slipping a noose round my neck, triced me up to the holsters of his saddle, remounted and returned with his prize to town, exulting in his cowardly triumph and every now and then tightening the cord so as to keep me

trotting upon the extremity of the toes to obtain relief. Vain would be the attempt to convey an adequate idea of the impotent rage then boiling within me at the insult offered to my juvenile dignity."

Boys' companions were treated in like fashion, and they were thus all four brought back to Verdun.

The officials, to whom the fate of the unhappy prisoners was entrusted, were indeed a vicious set of men, but Boys points out again and again that they were the outcome of the violent period of the Revolution, and says that his readers "must not form an opinion of French officers by them." In 1809 he tells us General Wirion, whose conduct had become notorious, was summoned to Paris to undergo his trial, when, foreseeing the result, he shot himself. Two years later, the Commandant Courcelles, who was convicted of gross extortions, was dismissed the army. The greater number of their underlings also came to a shameful end, of which Boys furnishes the details.

In the year 1807 Boys had the good fortune to effect his escape from Verdun; and this he did by a sailor's stratagem, which avoided the breaking of his parole.

To return to Lovell Edgeworth.

In the month of August 1812, when the future seemed impenetrably dark to the poor captives (for

no tidings of Napoleon's reverses ever reached their ears), we hear of a letter from Lovell having found its way to Edgeworthstown. Maria Edgeworth, writing on August 22 to her cousin Miss Ruxton, says: "I enclose a copy of Lovell's letter, which will give my dear aunt exquisite pleasure. His request to my father to pass him over, a prisoner and of precarious health, and to make his next brother [the] heir, shows that if he has suffered, he has, at least, had an opportunity of showing what he is. We shall do all we can to get at Talleyrand or some friend for his exchange."

CHAPTER XI

TALES OF FASHIONABLE LIFE

MARIA EDGEWORTH writes from her Irish home on May 4, 1805, when she was recovering from an attack of illness: "We are a little, but very little, afraid of being swallowed up by the French: they have so much to swallow and digest before they come to us! They did come once very near to be sure, but they got nothing by it."

In this same letter she remarks: "Charlotte *cordials* me twice a day with "Cecilia," which she reads charmingly, and which entertains me as much at the third reading as it did at the first."

We hear of a "sort of masquerade" being enacted at Edgeworthstown a few months earlier, of which mention is made in the "Memoir" by Mrs. Edgeworth. Maria thus describes her own part.

"*Miss E.* Madame Duval, the old Frenchwoman in 'Evelina'; hair drawn up to a prodigious height, powdered and surmounted with scarlet flowers, feathers and trumpery of all sorts, the whole

holding [on] by two pins, which she was in dread all night should be pulled out by Squire Richard, admirably played by William. He was at once noisy and countrified and as full of clownish, schoolboy practical jokes as Captain Mirvan himself, and once frightened 'Madame French' nearly into fits by throwing a whole collared eel to her at supper."

Mr. Edgeworth was in London during the early part of the summer of 1805. Maria writes on June 21:

"I had a most pleasant long letter from my father to-day. He has become acquainted with Mrs. Crewe—'Buff and blue and Mrs. Crewe'—and gives an account of a *déjeuner* at her house at Hampstead as quite delightful. Miss Crewe charmed him by praising 'To-morrow,' and he claimed, he says, remuneration on the spot—a song—which it is not easy to obtain; she sang, and he thought her singing worthy of its celebrity. He was charmed with old Dr. Burney, who at eighty-two was the most lively, well-bred, agreeable man in the room. Lord Stanhope begged to be presented to him, and he thought him the most wonderful man he ever met."

Mrs. Crewe's "house at Hampstead," where this attractive company assembled, was known formerly as "Camelford Cottage." A portion of it only remains at the present time; part of the cottage

having been taken down some years ago. Its long garden borders the West Heath, and its windows must have commanded fine views beyond the common of the undulating wooded country, with Harrow-on-the-Hill in the far distance.

Here Fanny Burney, the "modest authoress" of "Evelina" and of "Cecilia," used to come with her father in former days, to meet Edmund Burke, Erskine, and other celebrities.

In Maria Edgeworth's letters we have many a glimpse of well-known eighteenth-century folk. One day she meets Sir William Pepys—whose name so often occurs in Fanny Burney's "Diaries."

Here is a *bon-mot* of the "Queen of the Blues." "Mrs. Montagu," writes Maria, "once whispered to Sir William, on seeing a very awkward man coming into the room, 'There is a man who would give one of his hands to know what to do with the other!'"

During the period we have been writing of, Maria Edgeworth was working steadily at her "Tales of Fashionable Life," which were in fact novels, each complete in itself but of varying length. The first series was published in the month of June 1809, just two years before the advent of Jane Austen's first novel, and five years before the appearance of the first of Walter Scott's romances.

A long and favourable notice of the "Tales"

CAMELFORD COTTAGE

appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* of July, from the pen of Lord Jeffrey. The article opens with the following words:

"If it were possible for reviewers to *envy* the authors who are brought before them for judgment, we rather think we should be tempted to envy Miss Edgeworth: not, however, so much for her matchless powers of probable invention—her never-failing good sense and cheerfulness—nor her fine discrimination of characters; as for the delightful consciousness of having done more good than any other writer, male or female, of her generation. Other arts and sciences have their use no doubt, and heaven knows they have their reward and their fame, but the great art is the art of living; and the chief science, the science of being happy. . . . Miss Edgeworth is the great modern mistress in this school of true philosophy, and has eclipsed, we think, the fame of all her predecessors."

M. Dumont wrote to Miss Edgeworth on the appearance of her new work:

"We have been reading 'Tales of Fashionable Life' in society—all society is in fact a little Theatre—'Ennui' and 'Manœuvring' have had a marked success. Much of the dialogue is humorous in the very best style—that is to say, dialogue in which the characters develop themselves unconsciously and are amusing without any idea that they are so.

"Fear no difficulties. It is in these that your powers shine!"

It was to M. Dumont (the apostle of Bentham) that Mme. de Staël is said to have remarked, in her trenchant way: "Vraiment Miss Edgeworth est digne de l'enthousiasme, mais elle se perd dans votre triste utilité."

There is some truth in this criticism. Maria Edgeworth, we admit, insists too much, at times, upon the moral of the piece with the result that the reader is more attracted by the folly of the foolish than by the wisdom of the wise, and cannot help sympathising in the remark made by one of her characters: "We Irish is wonderful soon tired of goodness, if there's no spice of fun along with it." But this fault is much more observable in the early novels than in those of a later date, and in her best works does not exist at all.

In the summer of 1812 a second series of "Tales of Fashionable Life" made its appearance, and was again most favourably reviewed by Lord Jeffrey.

An advertisement of the work is to be found in a "List of New Publications" given in the *Edinburgh Review* of November of the same year under the heading of "Novels." The entry is as follows: "Edgeworth's 'Tales of Fashionable Life,' Vol. 4, 5, 6. 21s."

Immediately below this entry comes the an-

J. Constable

HAMPSTEAD HEATH

nouncement, "'Sense and Sensibility.' By a Lady, three vols. 15s.," * the first of Jane Austen's novels given to the public.

It is pleasant to learn from their letters that the authors admired each other's works, and that Maria Edgeworth truly appreciated the novel of "Persuasion."

The second series of "Tales of Fashionable Life" included the "Absentee"—a masterpiece—in which there is throughout the whole action a vigour and movement that carries the reader completely away. Yet to our surprise we learn that the greater part of this work was composed when Maria Edgeworth was suffering from severe toothache. "In spite of the torturing pain," says Mrs. Edgeworth, "she never wrote with more spirit and rapidity."

The chief personages of the story are Irish, and much of the scene is laid in Ireland, where the author is at all times especially strong, and where she has free scope for her racy humour.

But Miss Edgeworth, ever modest about her own productions, writes to a relative on the publication of this work: "I cannot by any form of words express how delighted I am . . . that my uncle and aunt are pleased with what they have read of 'The Absentee.' I long to hear whether this

* Facsimile given in "Jane Austen: Her Homes and her Friends."

favour continues to the end and extends to the catastrophe, that dangerous rock upon which poor authors, even after a prosperous voyage, are wrecked, sometimes while their friends are actually hailing them from the shore."

In the year 1814, "Waverley," the first of Scott's novels, made its appearance; published, as is well known, anonymously and creating a great and widespread sensation. The work was read aloud amidst the assembled family at Edgeworthstown, and Maria listened with enthralled attention.

"Late at night, in all the first fervour of admiration, she wrote to the Great Unknown," says Mrs. Edgeworth. "As Mr. Edgeworth had exclaimed as I closed the volume 'Aut Scotus aut Diabolus,' Maria placed those words at the top of her letter. Before she finished it, I opened the book again and said, 'There is a postscript by way of a preface,' which rather unwillingly she stopped to hear."

What must have been Maria's surprise and delight when she heard the following words recorded by the author of "Waverley"?

"It has been my object to describe the persons [of this narrative] not by a caricatured and exaggerated use of the national dialect, but by their habits, manners, and feelings; so as, in some distant degree, to emulate the admirable Irish portraits drawn by Miss Edgeworth."

From this gallery of Irish portraits we should like to hold up some particular picture for the reader's inspection—but they are not single portraits but form groups in which every individual depicted assists by contrast or combination in making the completeness of all.

Perhaps the reader may not be acquainted with a comedy by Miss Edgeworth, called *Love and Law*. We will, therefore, introduce him to two or three of its personages. These appear before a pompous magistrate of English race, who is utterly unable to cope with the excitable but quick-witted Celts whom he attempts to keep in order. Of these a hot-tempered but warm-hearted matron, Catty Rooney, is leader.

"Plase your honour will I speak now?" cries Catty, to the indignation of the officials in full court . . . "then I ixpect his honour will do me justice. I got a great character of his honour, I'd sooner come before your honour than any jantleman in all Ireland. I'm sure your honour will stand me friend."

Clerk. Silence!

The Magistrate, Mr. Carver. Misguided people of Ballynavogue and Ballynascraw—when I consider and look round me, gentlemen, and when I look round me and consider, how long a period of time I have had the honour to bear his Majesty's commission for the peace for this county——

CATTY [*curtsying*]. Your honour's a good warrant no doubt.

MR. CARVER. Hem!—hem!—also being a residentiary gentleman at Bob's Fort—hem!—hem!—hem!—— [*Coughs and blows his nose.*]

CATTY [*aside to her son*]. Choking the cratur is with the words he can't get out. [*Aloud.*] Will I spake now, plase your honour?

CLERK. Silence! Silence!

MR. CARVER. My good people of Ballynavogue and Ballynascraw, I stand here in unspeakable concern and astonishment, to notice at this fair in my barony, these symptoms of a riot, gentlemen, and features of a tumult.

CATTY. Them McBrides bred the riot entirely under Flourishing Phil, plase your honour.

MR. CARVER. Mr. Philip McBride, I am really concerned to see you, whom I looked upon as a sort of, I had almost said *gentleman*——

CATTY. *Jantleman!* what sort? Is it because of the new topped boots, or by virtue of the silver-topped whip, and the bit of red rag tied about the throat? Then a jantleman's asy made, nowadays.

PHILIP. It seems 'tis not so asy any way, to make a *gentlewoman*, Mrs. Rooney.

CATTY [*springing forward angrily*]. And is it me you mane, young man?

RANDAL. Oh! mother dear, don't be aggravating.

MR. CARVER. Clerk, why don't you maintain silence?

CATTY [*pressing before her son*]. Stand back, then, Randal Rooney—don't you hear *silence?*—don't be brawling before his honour. . . . I'll tell you how it was out o' the face, plase your honour, the whole Rooney faction——

MR. CARVER. *Faction!* No such word in my presence, madam.

CATTY. Oh, but I'm ready to swear it, plase your honour, in or out of the presence; the whole Rooney faction—every Rooney, big or little, that was in it, was bet, for no reason in life, by them McBrides there, them scum o' the earth.

MR. CARVER. Gently, gently, my good lady; no such thing in my presence as scum o' the earth.

CATTY. Well, Scotchmen if your honour prefars. But before a Scotchman, myself would prefar the poorest spalpeen.

CHAPTER XII

A WELCOME IN LONDON

Mrs. Barbauld, writing in the month of June 1814, remarks: "The three persons who have most engaged the attention of London societies [during the past year] have been women—Miss Edgeworth, Madame de Staël, and the Duchess of Oldenburg."

It was in May 1813 that Maria Edgeworth, in company with her father and step-mother, spent some weeks in London. They lodged at No. 10 Holles Street, a house which stands on the eastern side of the road near to Cavendish Square.

"The first persons who came to see us," writes Maria, "were Sir Humphry and Lady Davy, who have been uniformly kind and attentive to us. . . . We have been frequently at their dinners and parties and I should fill a roll as long as that genealogy Foot unrolled across the stage, if I were to give you a list of all the people we met at their house. Of Lord Byron I can tell you only that his appearance is nothing that you would remark."

NO. 10 HOLLES STREET

A Welcome in London

Mary Berry writes in her journal of May 12:

"I went to Lady Davy's in the evening. There were seventy or eighty people there: amongst others Miss Edgeworth, who was my object. She is very small, with a countenance which promises nothing at first sight, or as one sees her in society.

"She has very winning manners. She received with much warmth what I said of my desire to see the author of her works, and of all the obligations that I felt, in common with all our sex, towards one of her genius. She said a great many pretty things of all she had heard of me, and of my society."

The engaging qualities of the Miss Berrys have been made familiar to the world by Horace Walpole. As far back as 1788 he wrote on his first introduction to Mary Berry: "She is an angel inside and out." In the same letter in which these words occur, he remarks to his correspondent, "I must even tell you they dress within the bounds of fashion, though fashionably; but without the excrescences and balconies with which the modern hoydens overwhelm and barricade their persons—in short, good sense, information, simplicity and ease characterise the Berrys. . . . The eldest," he adds, "I discovered by chance, understands Latin, the younger draws charmingly."

At this same period he addressed to them the

following stanzas which were printed by his own Strawberry Hill Printing Press:

To Mary's lips has ancient Rome
Her purest language taught,
And from this modern city home
Agnes its pencil brought.

Rome's ancient Horace sweetly chants
Such maids with lyric fire;
Albion's old Horace sings nor paints—
He only can admire.

Still would his Press their fame record,
So amiable the Pair is;
But, ah! how vain to think his word
Can add a Straw to Berrys'.

Miss Edgeworth writes to a relative: "The Miss Berrys are all that you have heard of them from people of various tastes; consequently you know that they are well bred and have nice tact in conversation." And again she writes after mentioning various engagements, "called in the evening at Miss Berry's—quite like French society, most agreeable."

The Miss Berrys were living at this time at No. 26 North Audley Street. Lord Houghton, one of the frequenters of their celebrated salon, tells us that "when Miss Berry called out 'no more petticoats,' Murrell, their servant, used to put out the lamp over the door, to prevent more carriage-loads of ladies coming in. A few *habitués* of the male

MARY BERRY
From a miniature painted by Mrs. Mee

sex, however, knew that they could still come in whether the lamp was out or not."

In later years the sisters resided at No. 8 Curzon Street. "The day may be distant," writes Lord Houghton, "before social tradition forgets the house in Curzon Street where dwelt the Berrys," and "that modest room,

> "Where none were sad and few were dull,
> And each one said his best,
> And beauty was most beautiful
> With vanity at rest."

We have already had occasion to quote passages from Miss Berry's bright and graphic "Journals." It is pleasant to know that a large portion of them may now be enjoyed by the French nation, having been recently translated by Madame la Duchesse de Broglie (*née* Armaillé). They form a most attractive volume entitled "Voyages de Miss Berry à Paris, 1782–1836."

The *salons* of the Misses Berry, of Lady Davy and of Miss Lydia White were the most prominent in the London Society of 1813. They were carried on in the true French style—good conversation being their special attraction and refreshments kept within modest limits.

"Lydia White," writes Miss Edgeworth, "has been very kind to us, and eager to bring together people who would suit and please us; very agreeable dinner at her house. She conducts these *bel esprit*

parties well; her vivacity breaks through the constraint of those who stand upon great reputations and are afraid of committing themselves."

Walter Scott writes of Miss White a few years earlier: "She is nineteen times dyed blue, lively and clever and absurd to the uttermost degree, but exceedingly good-natured."

After meeting Lady Crewe in society, Maria writes: "Lady Crewe has still the remains of beauty. Except her *dress*, which happened to be blue, there appeared to be nothing else *blue* about her. The contrast between her really fashionable air and manners and that of the strugglers and imitators struck me much. . . . Miss Fox is very agreeable—converses at once without preface or commonplace—Lady Charlotte Lindsay ditto."

Speaking again of Lady Charlotte Lindsay, in an unpublished letter, Maria remarks: "Her humour and *good* humour never failed to spread a radiance of pleasure over every circle the moment she appeared; and as she moved from place to place in a crowded party you could see by the radiance whereabouts she was.

"Miss Catherine Fanshaw," she continues, "I particularly like. She has delightful talents. Her drawings for the Bath Guide are full of humour and character."

Finishing her letter in haste the following morning, Maria remarks: "I have been standing in my

dressing-gown and writing on the top of a chest of drawers, and now I must dress for a breakfast at Lady Davy's, where we are to meet Lord Byron."

This same breakfast is mentioned by Byron in a letter written some years later. "In 1813," he writes, "I recollect to have met them [the Edgeworths] in the fashionable world of London . . . in the assemblies of the hour, and at a breakfast of Sir Humphry and Lady Davy's, to which I was invited for the nonce. . . .

"I thought Edgeworth a fine old fellow . . . active, brisk, and endless. He was seventy, but did not look fifty—no, nor forty-eight even. . . . Edgeworth bounced about and talked loud and long. . . . He was not much admired in London. The fact was—everybody cared more about *her*. She was a nice, little, unassuming 'Jeanie Deans-looking body,' as we Scotch say—and, if not handsome, certainly not ill-looking. Her conversation was as quiet as herself. One would never have guessed she could write *her name;* whereas her father talked, *not* as if he could write nothing else, but as if nothing else was worth writing."

These words are somewhat severe; but Maria Edgeworth's inclination to keep in the shade when her beloved father was present, and her modesty in assuming that praise of her works was as much due to him as to herself, must have been rather trying to her admirers. It has indeed been truly

said by a recent critic that "in the works undertaken together, Maria's liveliness and intelligence were overweighted," and that it is those novels "in which her genius had free play . . . that keep her memory green even in this busy and forgetful day."*

Byron's was not a nature to draw out Miss Edgeworth's special powers of conversation, and he evidently had no experience of them. But another contemporary, the American writer Ticknor, has described them. "There was," he says, "a life and spirit about Miss Edgeworth's conversation, she threw herself into it with such *abandon;* she retorted with such brilliant repartee, and in short she talked with such an extraordinary flow of natural talent, that I don't know whether anything of the kind could be finer."

"Miss Edgeworth is delightful," says Tom Moore, "not from display, but from repose and unaffectedness." "She does not say witty things," wrote Sydney Smith, "but such a perfume of wit runs through all her conversation as makes it very brilliant."

There is a graphic description of Maria at this period given by Joanna Baillie in a letter to Walter Scott, dated July 15, 1813. "If you would give a silver sixpence as you say," she writes, "to see us

* *See* article on Maria Edgeworth in *Temple Bar* of July 1895.

W. Newton

together, each of us would, I am sure, have given a silver crown to have seen you a third in our party.

"I have found Miss Edgeworth a frank, animated, sensible and amusing woman, entirely free from affectation of any kind, and of a confiding and affectionate and friendly disposition that has really gained upon my heart. We met a good many times, and when we parted she was in tears like one who takes leave of an old friend.

"She has been received by everybody, the first in literature and the first in rank, with the most gratifying eagerness and respect, and has delighted them all. She is cheerful and talks easily and fluently, seems interested in every subject that comes into play, and tells her little anecdote or story (when her father does not take it out of her mouth) very pleasantly. . . .

"You would have been amused," she adds, "if you had seen with what eagerness people crowded to get a sight of Miss Edgeworth—who is very short—peeping over shoulders and between curled *têtes* to get but one look. She said herself at a party where I met her, that the crowd closed over her. She did indeed cause a strange commotion and had Madame Staël come, as she was expected, at the same time, I don't know what would have happened; the town must have run mad altogether." *

* "Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott," edited by David Douglas, 1894.

Maria Edgeworth

Walter Scott and Maria Edgeworth did not meet until the year 1823, but there is a passage about her in a letter from Scott to Joanna Baillie, written in 1817, that we are tempted to quote here, "About our dear Miss Edgeworth," he writes—"I never saw the criticisms she mentions, but I am sure if they mentioned my name along with hers, I should feel that they did me the highest degree of honour, and I am sure I can venture to say as much for the anonymous author of the novels; supposing that his modesty and good sense bear some proportion to the talents he has displayed. . . . Do say all you can," he remarks, "that is kind on my part to Miss Edgeworth, whose genius honours us all, as her gentleness and modesty honour her genius."*

Again writing to Joanna Baillie when there was a prospect of his meeting Miss Edgeworth, he says: "I expect her to be just what you describe—a being totally void of affectation, and who, like one other lady of my acquaintance, carries her literary reputation as freely and easily as the milkmaid in my country does the *leglen*, which she carries on her head and walks as gracefully with it as a duchess."

* "Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott," edited by David Douglas, 1894.

CHAPTER XIII

LONDON GAIETIES

"A FEW days after we came to town," writes Miss Edgeworth, "we were told by Mr. Wakefield that there was to be, at the Freemasons' Tavern, a meeting on the Lancastrian schools, and that the Dukes of Kent and Sussex, Lord Lansdowne, Sir James Macintosh, and Mr. Whitbread were all to speak. We went; fine large hall, ranged with green benches like a lecture-room, raised platform at one end for the *performers*, arm-chairs for the Royal Dukes, and common chairs for common men. . . .

"Enter on the platform the Royal Dukes, preceded by stewards with white staves [gentlemen of the committee, &c.]. The object of this meeting was to effect a junction between the Bell and Lancastrian parties. . . . Lord Lansdowne spoke extremely well, matter and manner. . . . It had been previously arranged that my father was to move the vote of thanks to the ladies, but of this we knew nothing; and when . . . I heard the

Duke of Kent in his sonorous voice say 'Mr. Edgeworth,' I was so frightened I dared not look up, but I was soon reassured. My father's speaking was, next to Lord Lansdowne's, the best I heard, and loud plaudits convinced me that I was not singular in this opinion."

It must have been difficult for Miss Edgeworth to find time for writing all her home letters in the midst of the bustle of her many engagements.

"Yesterday," she writes, "I had a good hour in comfort to write to you before breakfast, which was scarcely ended when Mr. Wakefield came in with a letter from the Duke of Bedford, who is anxious to see my father's experiments, on the draft of wheel-carriages, tried. Then came Lord Somerville, who sat and talked and invited us to his country-house, but all this did not forward my letter. Then came Lady Darnley; and then my father walked off with Lord Somerville, and we gave orders no one should be let in; so we only heard vain thunders at the door, and I got on half a page, but then came poor Peggy Langan, and her we admitted. She is in an excellent place . . . and she sat and talked and told of how happy she was and how good her mistress was, and we liked her simplicity and goodness of heart, but, as I said before, all this did not forward my letter."

We learn from Mrs. Edgeworth that this same

Peggy Langan was a grand-daughter of the original of Thady in "Castle Rackrent," and that it was a sister of hers who, at twelve years old, baked the rolls when her mother was ill, and suggested the character of Simple Susan.

The story of "Simple Susan" has been a prime favourite with both young and old for many a generation. Miss Edgeworth understood and sympathised with the child-mind in a way that few of our authors have done. On one occasion, we are told, "when she was at a crowded party a little girl suddenly started forth, looked at her hard, and said, 'I like "Simple Susan" best,' and rushed away overwhelmed at her own audacity."

On another occasion Maria had gone to dine at the house of a Mr. Marshall, whose daughter, Lady Monteagle, relates the following anecdote: "Everything had been prepared to do honour to their celebrated guest—the lights were lighted, the viands were cooked. Dinner was announced, and some important person was brought forward to hand Miss Edgeworth down, when it was discovered that she had vanished. For a moment the company and the dinner were all at a standstill. She was a small person, but diligent search was made. Miss Edgeworth had last been seen with the children of the house, and she was eventually found in the back kitchen, escorted by the said children, who, having confided their private

affairs to her sympathetic ear, had finally invited her to come with them and see some rabbits which they were rearing down below."*

Maria enjoyed intercourse during her visit to London with her cousin the Duchess of Wellington, "charming, amiable Lady Wellington!" She writes: "As she truly said of herself, she is always 'Kitty Pakenham' to her friends. After comparison with crowds of others, *beaux esprits*, fine ladies, and fashionable scramblers for notoriety, her dignified, graceful simplicity rises in one's opinion, and we feel it with more conviction of its superiority."

Her appearance at an evening party is thus described by Mrs. Edgeworth: "Yesterday Lady Wellington looked most lovely in grey tabinet, short with fringe at bottom, white shining gauze sleeves, full and twisted round the arm, and at each puff a silver filigree button. On her neck crape folded which left but a small space for a beautiful necklace of tiny shell cameos, set and strung together; and the same crossed her smooth and well-plaited hair which was fastened up in the prettiest penelope with a pearl-topped comb."

"Many and various are the modes of dressing [the hair]," remarks Mrs. Edgeworth. "I prefer a turban to all others."

In the same letter the writer speaks of her

* *See* Lady Ritchie's essay on "Maria Edgeworth."

Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.
CATHERINE PAKENHAM, FIRST DUCHESS OF WELLINGTON

shopping experiences. "While Mr. E. was doing some money business," she writes to her sister, "I went into a showy-looking shop in St. Paul's Churchyard, where my fancy was struck by the enclosed veil. I gave thirty-six shillings for it. The ground is uncommonly fine and clear, and the edge new, the sprig light as you desire. . . . I am not sure what sort of thing you mean by the 'crab's apron.' Pray explain. It is amazing the variety of clothes I see on some people. . . . I have never seen any change of costume in the evening."*

Maria Edgeworth writes: "We have been to a grand night at Mrs. Hope's—the rooms really deserve the French epithet of *superbe*—all of beauty, rank and fashion that London can assemble, I may say, in the newspaper style, were there. The crowd of carriages was so great that, after sitting waiting in ours for an hour, the coachman told us there was no chance of getting in unless we got out and walked. Another good-natured coachman backed his horses, and we bravely crossed the line and got into the house and up the staircase, but no power of ours could have got us in but for the gloriously large body and the good-natured politeness of the Archbishop of Tuam, who fortunately met us at the door, recognised, and made way for us through the crowd; and in the wake of his greatness we sailed on prosperously and never

* Edgeworth MSS.

stopped till he presented us to his beautiful daughter. . . . Among the old beauties the Duchess of Rutland held her pre-eminence and looked the youngest. . . .

"The Prince Regent stood one-third of the night holding converse with Lady Elizabeth Monk, she leaning gracefully on a bronze ornament in the centre of the room, in the midst of the sacred and very small circle etiquette could keep round them."

An anecdote of the Prince Regent is mentioned in one of Mrs. Edgeworth's unpublished letters of this date. Lord Whitworth had just been appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. "It is said," she writes, "that at dinner at the Prince Regent's the other day the Prince drank Lord Whitworth's health, saying, 'I am greatly obliged to you, my Lord, for accepting the government of a country which nothing but a sense of duty could induce you to do. I have already offered it to two dukes and an earl in vain.' By this speech the unlucky Regent offended all the noblemen in question, insulted Ireland, and did not please Lord Whitworth."

"We laugh at Maria," continues the writer, "for having been visited by Ladies Besborough and Melbourne, and the Duchess of Sussex, and the Princess of Wales and all (those) who are setting up new regulations on the strength of wit and blue

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stockings—when beauty and white hose could charm no more."

We presume that the Princess of Wales must have called by deputy, for later on when she had signified her desire to see Miss Edgeworth at her own residence Mrs. Edgeworth writes: "Maria did not at all like to visit the Princess of Wales. Her father and I fully agreed with her but we feared that from Royalty a request must be considered a command. We consulted Lady Wellington, who referred the case to Lady Liverpool, then considered as the best authority on points of etiquette, and she ruled that Miss Edgeworth might decline the invitation by the simple form of 'sorry she can't, previous engagement, &c. &c.' Maria wrote to that effect to the Princess and heard no more of the matter."

Miss Berry writes of this singular woman, "Her conversation is certainly uncommonly lively, odd and clever. What a pity that she has not a grain of *common* sense! Not an ounce of ballast to prevent high spirits . . . from running away with her and allowing her to act indecorously and ridiculously whenever an occasion offers!"

In the following year (1814) the Edgeworth's friend, young Dr. Henry Holland, accompanied the Princess of Wales, as her physician on a tour in Germany, Switzerland and Italy. One evening when a ball was taking place in a German town,

where Court etiquette was very stiff, the Princess requested her doctor to dance with her, which greatly disconcerted the young man. Maria, commenting upon this circumstance in a letter to Dr. Holland's father, says: "My father declares that if he had been in Dr. Holland's situation . . . the moment he had drawn on his gloves, he would have had the cramp suddenly in the calf of his leg, and would have writhed in double agony of body and mind—'absolutely incapable—how unfortunate—of availing himself—high honour—of obeying her Royal Highness's command'—and so have got off and out of the room!"*

When the Edgeworths were in London in 1813 the waltz was just coming into vogue in fashionable assemblies. It had already appeared in France some years earlier, but under a different form. The dance as we see it to-day was much disapproved by some ladies. Mary Russell Mitford remarks in one of her letters: "I cannot perceive its vaunted grace. What beauty can there be in a series of dizzying evolutions, of which the wearisome monotony banishes all the tricksy fancies of the 'poetry of motion,' and conveys to the eyes of the spectators the idea of a parcel of teetotums set a-spinning for their amusement."

"The following anecdote," writes Mrs. Edgeworth, "has been handed about with much applause.

* Edgeworth MSS.

Lady —— invited Lady Grantham to a 'waltzing Ball,' but added in her note, 'If you don't waltz don't come!' Lady G. replied, 'I don't waltz, so I sha'n't go to your Ball. Will you dine with me on Thursday? But if you don't eat white soup don't come!'"*

* Edgeworth MSS.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TRAGIC AND THE COMIC MUSE

Mrs. Edgeworth, writing on May 29 of their various engagements on the previous evening, says: "Maria was carried off by her father to dine as an author at Johnson's in St. Paul's Churchyard. . . . I dined with the Sneyds in great haste. Then we four and four more of their friends, drove off to Drury Lane, which none of us had yet seen, and were there just in time.

"It is a most beautiful house, and the entrances and exits are better contrived than in any theatre I ever before saw. Near the close of the first act Mr. Edgeworth and Maria arrived—soon after Sir James and Lady Mackintosh. Our box was now full. The play, which was the *Castle of Andalusia*, did not entertain us much [but] we had our money's worth in looking at the house and prating with the Mackintoshes, who are uncommonly agreeable."*

The opening ceremony of the "New Theatre in

* Edgeworth MSS.

Drury Lane" had taken place just six months before the Edgeworths visited the house. The managers had offered a prize of twenty pounds for the best poem or essay to be read on this occasion, and it was this circumstance which called into being the well-known "Rejected Addresses," by the brothers James and Horace Smith; a series of parodies upon the styles of the most celebrated authors of the day; who are each of them supposed to have competed for the prize. We are tempted to give a few lines of the poem in imitation of Lord Byron's gloomy muse entitled:

CUI BONO?

By Lord B.

Sated with home, of wife, of children tired,
The restless soul is driven abroad to roam;
Sated abroad, all seen, yet nought admired,
The restless soul is driven to ramble home;
Sated with both, beneath new Drury's dome
The fiend Ennui awhile consents to pine,
There growls, and curses like a deadly gnome
Scorning to view fantastic Columbine,
Viewing with scorn and hate the nonsense of the Nine.

* * * *

To him whose soul is with fruition fraught,
The song of Braham is an Irish howl;
Thinking is but an idle waste of thought,
And nought is everything, and everything is nought.

After meeting the brothers Smith in society a few years later, Maria Edgeworth writes: "Mr.

James Smith told Fanny that he had intended to put me into the 'Rejected Addresses,' and had written a part in the character of an Irish labourer, but it was so flat he threw it aside."

In 1813 Mrs. Siddons, Sir Joshua Reynolds's "Tragic Muse," was still performing occasionally on the London boards, while Mrs. Abington, his "Comic Muse," though now retired altogether from the stage, was still to be seen at times in private parties. "We met one evening at Lady Charleville's Mrs. Abington," writes Mrs. Edgeworth, "with whom Maria was much entertained. She recited two epilogues for us with exquisite wit and grace. She spoke with frankness and feeling of her career, when often after the triumph of success in some brilliant character, splendidly dressed, in the blaze of light, with thunders of applause, she quitted the theatre for her poor little lonely lodging, and admirably described her disenchanted, dispirited sensations."

Miss Edgeworth speaks of looking forward to seeing Mrs. Siddons act on the 25th of May in this year, but unfortunately there is no account of the performance in any of her letters that have been preserved. Some years later, she had the privilege of knowing the great actress in private life. Writing from London in April 1822, she says: "Through Lydia White we have become more acquainted with Mrs. Siddons than I ever expected

Thos. Lawrence

MRS. SIDDONS

to be. She gave us the history of her first acting of *Lady Macbeth*, and of her resolving, in the sleep [walking] scene, to lay down the candlestick, contrary to the precedent of Mrs. Pritchard and all the traditions, before she began to wash her hands and say, 'Out, vile spot!' Sheridan knocked violently at her door, during the five minutes she had desired to have entirely to herself, to compose her spirits before the play began. He burst in, and prophesied that she would ruin herself for ever if she persevered in this resolution *to lay down the candlestick!* She persisted however in her determination, succeeded, was applauded, and Sheridan begged her pardon. She described well the awe she felt, and the power of the excitement given to her by the sight of Burke, Fox, Sheridan, and Sir Joshua Reynolds in the pit."

Mrs. Richard Trench wrote in June 1822: "Is it not worth something to have seen Mrs. Siddons in her days of magnificence? Mrs. Siddons, who has lent to the very syllables of her name an elevation and a charm so strong that no effort of mind could now effect their separation—so strong that none who saw her in the splendour of her meridian, ever pronounced that name without a tone and a manner more softened and raised than their habitual discourse.

"She sometimes gave vitality to a line that

stamped it for ever, while all surrounding recollections have faded away.

"I remember her saying to a servant who had betrayed her, in some play no longer acted: 'There's gold for thee; but see my face no more!'

"There is no giving an adequate impression of the might, the majesty of grace she possessed, nor of the effect on a young heart of the deep and mysterious tones of her voice."*

"Mrs. Siddons is beautiful at this moment," continues Miss Edgeworth. "She invited us to a private reading-party at her own house. . . . She read one of her finest parts—*Queen Katherine.* She was dressed so as to do well for the two parts she was to perform this night, of gentlewoman and queen—black velvet, with black velvet cap and feathers. She sat the whole time, with a large Shakespeare before her; as she knew the part of Katherine by heart, she seldom required the help of glasses; and she recited it incomparably well; the changes of her countenance were striking. From her first burst of indignation when she objects to the Cardinal as her judge, to her last expiring scene, all was so perfectly natural and so touching, we could give no applause but tears."

* *See* "Remains of Mrs. Richard Trench."

CHAPTER XV

CHILDE HAROLD AND CORINNE

THE works of Byron and of Mme. de Staël were being much discussed in London society in 1813. The bent of Lord Byron's genius did not much appeal to Maria Edgeworth; the "all for murder, all for crime system of poetry" as she styles it, but she was attracted by the commanding talents of Mme. de Staël. "I have read 'Corinne' with my father," she wrote in 1808, "and I like it better than he does. In one word, I am dazzled by the genius, provoked by the absurdities, and in admiration of the taste and critical judgment of Italian literature displayed throughout the whole work. I almost broke my foolish heart over the end of the third volume, and my father acknowledges he never read anything more pathetic."

Madame de Staël was on her way to England when Miss Edgeworth was in London in May 1813. She had quitted Geneva, weary of the constant trials that accompanied an exile inflicted by Napoleon, and had determined to seek a freer life

in England—England, that country "à la fois de la vie de famille et de la liberté publique." But at this time the Continent was almost closed to a traveller who was under the ban of the Emperor, and she had to reach our shores by way of St. Petersburg!

Maria Edgeworth writes from London: "I fear Madame de Staël's arrival may be put off till after we leave town. The *Edinburgh* review of her book has well prepared all the world for her."

This book, entitled "De la Littérature," had appeared before the public in the autumn of 1812. Mme. de Staël's chief object in coming to England, in June 1813, was to get her new work, "De l'Allemagne," printed and published there—a work which, it has been said, "constitutes one of her greatest claims to enduring fame."

The book, which treats solely of German literature, and does not even allude to politics, had been on the eve of publication in Paris in 1810. "It had already been examined, and its publication authorised by the Imperial censors," writes Sainte-Beuve, "when the police suddenly received orders to effect its destruction, and thus the whole edition (consisting of 10,000 copies) was annihilated. . . . The grief and indignation of Mme. de Staël on the occasion was great, for she saw the results of six years of patient work, and of personal experience, destroyed, and found herself the victim of an

increase of cruel persecution at the very moment when she had reason to expect that it was coming to an end."

Mme. de Staël, with all her social endowments and her ardent love of Paris, suffered keenly during her banishment. "No one can have any idea," she wrote to a friend, "what exile is. It is the hundred-headed hydra as regards unhappiness." And again: "One is dead when one is exiled. One's house is but a tomb where the post arrives."

On the birth of Napoleon's child in 1811 "the Préfet of Geneva slyly insinuated to Madame de Staël the advisability of her writing some eulogy, however short, upon the little King of Rome; a course of action which would, he assured her, smooth all difficulties in the future, and would throw open to her every capital in Europe. But not for one instant," remarks Sainte-Beuve, "would she entertain such an idea."

On her arrival in England, in 1813, Mme. de Staël received a kindly and flattering welcome from all our leading statesmen and men of letters, a welcome which she keenly appreciated. The following entry in the "Diary" of Crabb Robinson tells us of the final triumph of "De l'Allemagne." Writing on July 11 (1813), he remarks: "Called this morning on Madame de Staël at 3 George Street, Hanover Square. . . . Murray, the bookseller, was with her, and I assisted in drawing up the agreement

for her forthcoming work on Germany, for which she is to receive 1500 guineas."

During her residence in London Mme. de Staël and Lord Byron were the most prominent figures in society. They formed a curious contrast. Her countenance, which was plain, with the exception of bright, sparkling eyes, was expressive of frankness and enthusiasm, while his face of statuesque beauty reflected the sentiments chiefly of gloom and sarcasm.

"Byron's countenance is fine when it is in repose," writes the Countess Granville, "but the moment it is in play, suspicious, malignant, and consequently repulsive. His manner is either remarkably gracious and conciliatory, with a tinge of affectation, or irritable and impetuous, and then, I am afraid, perfectly natural." "His is a mind," remarks Miss Catherine Fanshaw, "that never conveys the idea of sunshine. It is a dark night upon which the lightning flashes."

The last-named lady has described an evening spent in the company of Mme. de Staël and Lord Byron.

"I have just stayed in London," she writes, "long enough to get a sight of the last-imported lion—Mme. de Staël; but it was worth twenty peeps through ordinary show-boxes, being the longest and most entertaining dinner at which I ever in my life was present. . . .

"Had the whole discourse been written without one syllable of correction, it would be difficult to name a dialogue so full of eloquence and wit. Eloquence is a great word, but not too big for her. . . . The wit was his. . . .

"Mme. de Staël was astonished to hear that this pure and perfect constitution was in need of radical reform . . . and that Great Britain, the bulwark of the world, . . . was herself feeble, disjointed, and almost on the eve of ruin. So at least it was represented by her antagonist in argument, Childe Harold, whose sentiments grew deeper and darker in proportion to her enthusiasm. . . . As foreigners have no idea that any opposition to Government is compatible with general obedience and loyalty, Madame de Staël's astonishment was unbounded. I thought her perfectly justified in replying to these pathetic mournings over departed liberty: 'Et vous comptez pour rien la liberté de dire tout cela, et même devant les domestiques!'"

Mme. de Staël's eloquence was felt to be "rather overwhelming" by those who desired to have a reasonable share in the conversation. Byron remarks in one of his letters: "This lady writes octavos and *talks* folios. . . . The party went off very well," he continues, "but we got up too soon after the women; and Mrs. Corinne always lingers so long after dinner that we wish her in—the drawing-room!"

And he observes pathetically in another letter that it is mortifying "to be checkmated by a plain woman."

"We are now very good friends," he says in a letter dated December 1813; "though the Staël asked Lady Melbourne whether I had really any *bonhomie*. She might as well have asked that question before she told L. C., 'C'est un démon!' True enough, but rather premature, for *she* could not have found it out, and so—she wants me to dine there next Sunday."

Soon after "De l'Allemagne" was published Byron was invited to meet the author at Holland House. "What the devil shall I say about 'De l'Allemagne'?" he writes. "I like it prodigiously; but unless I can twist my admiration into some fantastical expression she won't believe me."

"Her works," he says in another letter, "are my delight, and so is she herself for—half an hour. I don't like her politics. . . . But she is a woman by herself, and has done more than all the rest of them together, intellectually;—she ought to have been a man."

The Duke of Wellington said of her: "She was a most agreeable woman, if you only *kept her light* and away from politics. But that was not easy. She was always trying to come to matters of State. I have said to her more than once: 'Je déteste

parler politique'; and she answered: 'Parler politique pour moi c'est vivre.'"

"The Staël is a genius," writes Dr. Bollman, "an extraordinary eccentric woman in all that she does. She only sleeps during a very few hours, and is uninterruptedly and fearfully busy all the rest of the time. Whilst her hair is being dressed, whilst she breakfasts, in fact, during a third of the day, she writes." "But she does not dwell long enough upon anything," remarks Miss Berry; "life, characters, and even feelings, pass before her eyes like a magic-lantern. She spends herself upon paper, and runs through the world to see all, to hear all, and to say all."

CHAPTER XVI

HOPE DAWNS FOR THE DÉTENUS

We will now return to Lovell Edgeworth, whom we left a prisoner-of-war in the dreary town of Verdun. There he remained for nearly eleven years; but now at last his captivity was drawing to an end.

After the great defeat of Napoleon at Leipzig in November 1813 the Allied armies were known to be gradually approaching the French frontier, and early in January 1814 news arrived that they had actually crossed the Rhine. It was greatly feared by the French Government that the English prisoners might rise, overpower their jailors, and open the gates of the town to the enemy; and an order was issued that the prisoners should be sent in all haste to Blois. "During the three days given for the accomplishment of this order," writes Captain Boys, "scenes of confusion occurred never before witnessed in Verdun. Eleven hundred prisoners of all ranks, rejoicing and exulting in the move; tumultuous assemblages in almost every

street; Jews and tradesmen bustling from house to house for payment of debts, when by far the greater number of prisoners were almost penniless; . . . Major de Meulan [the commandant] gone to Blois; hence no commanding officer [on the scene], no arrangements, no subordination, and the feeble French authorities in hourly dread of the English taking possession of the place. . . .

"Vehicles and draught quadrupeds of every description were put in requisition, and congregated masses of youth and age, of vigour and infirmity, moved off in dense confusion, affording a faint idea of Israel's retreat from the land of Egypt." *

A further removal of the prisoners was soon found to be necessary, and they were sent for the most part to various central fortified towns, where already more than 20,000 English captives were languishing; but a few were forwarded to Paris, and among these latter was Lovell Edgeworth.

Happily he has left an account of his experiences during this stirring time. The MS. is docketed as follows by his sister, Maria Edgeworth:

"This is a narrative which Lovell spoke to my father the evening after he came home, and I afterwards wrote it down as nearly as I could recollect it, I believe almost word for word.—M. E."

* "Narrative of a Captivity, Escape, and Adventures," by Edward Boys, Captain R.N.

"On the 27th of January, 1814, when the Allies were approaching Paris, I was alarmed by a report that all the English prisoners would immediately be ordered out of Paris, and sent back to Verdun, to Blois, Gueret, or some other of the Depôts. . . . I knew that if once I should be sent away from Paris my chance of obtaining my liberty, my hopes of soon returning home, would be at an end. I had not a single friend in power, or a single friend connected with those in power. The only person to whom I thought I could venture at this moment to apply was the Comte Réal, an officer high in the Police, next in authority to Savary, Duc de Rovigo (famous or infamous all over Europe for his letter to Madame de Staël ordering her out of Paris). To M. le Comte Réal I was a stranger, but I knew that he was a man of science and literature, and Sir Humphry Davy had told me that he had given the book my father had just published, 'Essay on the Construction of Roads and Wheel Carriages,' to M. le Comte Réal, and that he had spoken of it with approbation. Upon this hint I spake—no, I wrote to the Count, and with my letter in my pocket I went to Beauvilliers', the *traiteur* where I usually dined.

"At Beauvilliers' there was a certain boy who had . . . served me in the capacity of a shoe-boy. I had taught him to read and write, and with a prentice fee of a few guineas I had placed him with Beauvilliers, to

keep him, if possible, out of the way of the conscription. . . . Beauvilliers had behaved handsomely about this boy, had taken him for less than the usual fee, and had always been kind to him. The boy was an excellent creature, very grateful and affectionate. I never shall forget his look when I told him that I was afraid I should be ordered away from Paris and that I should lose all chance of getting home to my friends. . . . [It seemed] as if he had been suddenly stupefied. When he recovered the use of his senses he went to tell his master, Beauvilliers, the bad news. Beauvilliers, who, on the boy's account, interested himself warmly for me, declared that he would apply directly to a great friend of his, Regnault St. Jean d'Angely, who was at that time a man high in power above the Duc de Rovigo in the Police, Conseiller d'Etat—Ministre—a word or a line from him would do my business at once. Beauvilliers threw off his cook's jacket, said he would powder and dress immediately and go to St. Jean and do his best for me. So he powdered and dressed and went to St. Jean, and carried my letter to the Comte Réal, that he might shew it to St. Jean to prove that I was a *savant* and son of a *savant* and *un bon sujet*, and so forth.

"What my *traiteur* said to St. Jean, or St. Jean to the *traiteur*, I do not know, but Beauvilliers returned in high spirits and assured me that I

might remain securely at Paris, for that St. Jean d'Angely liked my letter and said he would write about me himself. This was very good news; but day passed after day, and no regular written permission to remain in Paris came to me, and I was afraid that the underlings of the Police would be with me again. Beauvilliers laughed at my fears. What! when St. Jean d'Angely had spoken; when St. Jean d'Angely had promised to speak, what could I fear? '*Allez! Allez! Ne craignez rien. Soyez tranquille.*' I persisted, however, in observing that I was not *in order* remaining this way upon sufferance, and Beauvilliers was quite provoked, and muttered, '*Mauvaise tête! Mauvaise tête!* These English must always be doing something.'

"Notwithstanding Beauvilliers' *ne craignez rien*, an officer of the Police brought me, on the 1st of March, a passport and an order immediately to leave Paris for Blois.

"Beauvilliers and my grateful boy were now in the utmost consternation. On the 2nd, Beauvilliers went to St. Jean d'Angely again, and St. Jean said he would see me the next day. Accordingly the next day I waited upon him, having taken the precaution to write my business as shortly as possible on a slip of paper. . . .

"When I arrived at St. Jean d'Angely's magnificent Hotel, it happened that there was no servant in waiting in the ante-chamber. I made my own way

forward, however, . . . till I came to an apartment at the end of which was a glass door, through which I saw St. Jean sitting with another person in earnest conversation. St. Jean turned his head, saw me, started up, came out in a fury, in which there seemed some mixture of terror, exclaiming, "Qui est tu? Qui est tu? Que fais tu là?" I stood perfectly still, and I believe without changing countenance in the least, trusting that my composure might convince him I had no bad designs—that, in short, I was not an assassin, for which he seemed to take me. I said very quietly, 'I feared I had mistaken my way and had intruded upon him, but I had not seen any domestics in the ante-chamber.' 'Ah, ce n'est que cela, c'est bon,' said he—then pointing to the door of another apartment on the opposite side, bade me pass that way and give my letter to his secretary.

"The secretary before whom my slip of paper was laid . . . exclaimed on seeing the name of Edgeworth, and asked with some emotion if I was any relation to the Mr. and Miss Edgeworth, the authors. I answered that I was the son of the Mr. Edgeworth of whom he spoke, and the brother of Miss Edgeworth. 'What, the Mr. and Miss Edgeworth who wrote 'L'Education Pratique'? 'Yes.' Then the secretary made many enthusiastic exclamations, and spoke of the book in a manner that would have gratified me at any time, but which was at this

moment peculiarly agreeable. The secretary said that he had made a number of extracts from the work once, when it had been lent to him, but that he had never been able to procure a copy of it, though he inquired at many booksellers. From compliments he proceeded to business, and he appeared quite in earnest and zealous about a letter (from St. Jean d'Angely) to the Duc de Feltre (on my behalf), which he assured me should be written without delay. . . . It was a point of no small consequence at this crisis to make a friend of this great man's secretary, for the expediting of my affairs depended on him. . . .

" I spent the greater part of the next day in hunting every bookseller's shop in Paris for a copy of 'L'Education Pratique.' At last I was so lucky as to find one, and I believe it was the only copy in Paris. I sent it to my friend the secretary, who at my request gave me a copy of the letter to the Duc de Feltre, which was as follows:

" ' *Copie Confidentielle à S. E. M.*

" ' MONSIEUR LE DUC,

" ' M. Lovell Edgeworth, Irelandois d'origine, & demeurant à Paris, Hôtel du Rhin & Moselle, Place Vendôme, est soumis à l'ordre de votre Excellence; qui renvoie de Paris les Anglois qui s'y trouvent. Résident en France dépuis onze ans, fils d'un homme qui a rendue des services à Lyons—

frère du célèbre auteur Mademoiselle Edgeworth, il ne s'occupe lui-même absolument, que de littérature! Il est connu de plusieurs académiciens à Paris, & même très lié avec M. Arnault, mon beau-frère. Je prie votre Excellence de ne pas exiger que ce savant subisse une expulsion qui ferait un tort extrême à ses travaux littéraires, et de vouloir bien m'adresser une autorisation particulière d'exception en faveur de cet étranger paisible, qui je recommande pour son mérite & ses qualités personelles à toutes vos bontés.

"'Je prie votre Excellence, &c.'

"But this letter to the Duc de Feltre, though written and sent, never was to be answered, and never was of any service to me. In a few days the situations of the Duc de Feltre, of St. Jean d'Angely, of his secretary, and of myself were completely changed. The fate of Paris and of Europe miraculously changed.

[But this could not be foreseen.]

". . . Of the movements of the armies which were at this time so near Paris, we were in ignorance. One moment we were told Buonaparte had gained a great victory . . . that the Allies were retreating; then that he had surrounded them, &c. We heard only what Buonaparte's emissaries chose that we should be told. . . . [But] facts at last spoke for themselves, and the truth made its way to our ears

and hearts in language that could not be misunderstood.

"On the 28th of March we heard the rolling of cannon in the streets. The next day the Empress left Paris. On the 30th, as I was dining at the house of a friend, we heard firing. I looked out of the window, and saw the cross-firing from the heights of Montmartre. The Allied armies were firing upon Paris. Then I knew that all was over. Those heights occupied by the Allies commanded the city. Paris, we knew, must surrender. All was joy now among the English prisoners. My own transports of delight I will not—I cannot describe.

"On the morning of the 31st I saw fires in the Place Vendôme, and found that they were burning papers belonging to the *Etat-major*, *feu de joie* to me! This day the Allied armies entered Paris as friends. The liberation of the English prisoners was soon afterwards declared. . . .

"It would be difficult to tell whether at this moment my grateful boy felt most joy or sorrow. He rejoiced with me in my deliverance, but, poor fellow, he was very sorry to part with me. For any little services I had been able to do him his gratitude overpaid me. And, but for the miraculous events which changed all our situations in a manner which the most romantic could not have foreseen, I must have owed my return to my country and family to this boy's gratitude, [as shown] in the

interest with which he inspired Beauvilliers the *traiteur* in my favour.

"What became of St. Jean d'Angely? He was no longer a great man. All was broken up in his department. All in his Hotel was in confusion. I am sorry to say that my friend St. Jean acted but a shabby part. He ran away, or, as his friends said, he mounted his horse and rode out of Paris into the country."

We are able to gather some further details of this gentleman's flight from the Rev. Edward Stanley, who visited Paris a few months later. Writing to a friend, he says: "You will like to hear something of Edgeworth's friend St. Jean d'Angely. He came up to the barrier where our landlord (who had fought in the battle of Marengo) was posted. Here he called loudly for some brandy, for which he got laughed at by the whole line of guard. He then sallied forth and proceeded a short distance, when his horse took fright, and as St. Jean was (as our landlord told us) 'entièrement du même avis avec son cheval,' they both set off as fast as they could, and were in a few minutes far beyond all danger; nor did they appear again amid the din of arms.

"The heights were defended," remarks Stanley, "in a very inadequate and unsoldier-like manner; not a single work was thrown up before the guns, no entrenchments, no bastions. . . . The barriers

all round Paris are hemmed round with palisades with loopholes, each of which might have been demolished by half a dozen rounds from a six-pounder: the French, indeed, laugh at them. . . . These [palisades] are made of *la bois de tremble* (aspen), and the pun was that the fortifications *tremblaient partout*."*

"Most of the English prisoners," continues Lovell, "who were thus suddenly set at liberty, instead of being in haste to leave Paris, were determined to remain to see the catastrophe of all these wonderful events. . . . But I was resolved to make no delay; I was too impatient to see my father and my friends at home once more. . . . I found, however, it was impossible to leave Paris for a few days; at least it was impossible to get to Calais. The roads were not safe. Our friends the Cossacks were robbing night and day. I was compelled to have patience, till the diligence could run with safety, for there was no other means of travelling. In the course of these few days that I was detained I saw a great deal of the Parisians.

"*Will* it be believed? *Can* it be believed that many people whom I met at this time in Paris, people not of the lower, but of the middle class, scarcely knew, or recollected, that there existed, or had ever existed, such persons as the Bourbons?

* "Before and after Waterloo," by Rev. Edward Stanley, sometime Bishop of Norwich.

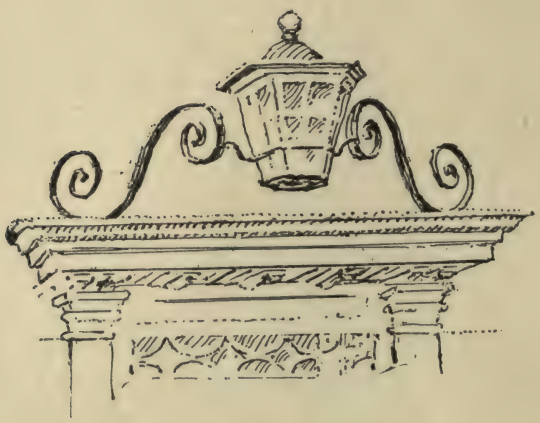
They asked me various questions about the life and death of Louis the sixteenth, and when I mentioned Louis the eighteenth and Monsieur they hardly knew who they were. In fact, since the French Revolution, since the period when Louis the sixteenth was guillotined, a new generation had grown up, and had seen nothing that could remind them of the past. . . .

"Several ladies of the families of the ancient nobility were at this crisis very zealous and active in the cause of the Bourbons, and certainly they had considerable influence over the minds of the people, reviving among them the old national sentiment of *Vive le Roi!* and preparing to raise the cry of '*Vive Louis dix-huit!*' A friend of mine, Madame de Roquefeuille, one of the old nobility, one of the ladies who formerly attended *Mesdames* in their flight into Italy, was now conspicuously zealous for the restoration of the Bourbons.

"After the capital had capitulated, just before the Allies entered Paris, Madame de Roquefeuille went early in the morning in an open barouche into the Place Louis quinze; there she distributed white cockades and ribbons among the people who had collected in crowds to hear the news. She explained to them who Monsieur and Louis the eighteenth are, told them that these descendants from their rightful kings were coming back to them, that there would be no more conscriptions. Then

instructed them what to say and when to cry '*Vive Alexandre!*' '*Vive le Prince!*' and '*Vive Louis XVIII.!*' when the Allies should make their appearance in Paris.

"All that happened in Paris at this time was certainly most interesting and curious. I should have liked to have seen more of the emotions of the people and of the various turns and management of the popular mind, but I set out in the second diligence that ran, and I was, as I believe, the first English prisoner who quitted Paris."



CHAPTER XVII

THE BOURBONS RESTORED

"The fate of Paris," writes the Rev. Edward Stanley, "was decided with a rapidity and *sang-froid* quite astonishing. By five o'clock in the evening [of March 31st] all was entirely at an end, and the National Guard and the Allies incorporated, and doing the usual duty of the town. . . . The next day the Palais Royal was as brilliant and more cheerful than ever, with its motley groups of visitors."*

"In this town," writes the Comtesse de Boigne,† "neither warfare, nor foreign occupation, nor rioting, nor disturbances of any kind, can modify the finery of the women. On Tuesday they were parading their plumed hats upon the boulevards in the midst of the wounded, defying the shells. On Wednesday they were witnessing the Allied army march past. On Thursday they appeared in

* *See* "Before and after Waterloo."

† "Mémoires de la Comtesse de Boigne," par M. Charles Nicoullaud, 1907.

their most elegant costumes in the midst of the bivouac of the Cossacks in the Champs Elysées!

"This bivouac," she says, "formed a singular spectacle. It was indeed strange to behold these inhabitants of the banks of the Don peacefully engaged in their ordinary avocations in the heart of Paris! They had neither tents nor shelter of any kind. Three or four of their horses were tied to each tree, whilst the riders sat on the ground hard by, talking together in gentle tones, and mending their boots or their horses' harness.

"These Cossacks allowed the sightseers to come close to them, especially the women and children, who were literally upon their very shoulders."

Writing during the first week of April, the Comtesse says: "Early on Friday morning [a friend] sent us word that the sovereigns were going to the Opera that evening. Immediately our servants were sent off on a campaign to secure boxes so that we might be there in full force. The artificial flower-makers were besieged to furnish us with lilies to be worn in our hair, in bouquets, and in garlands. The men wore the white cockade in their hats.

"So far," she remarks, "all was well; but I blush, as a Frenchwoman, to record our behaviour at this performance. In the first place, we began by applauding the Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia to the skies. In the next, we had

the doors of our boxes thrown open, and the greater the throng of foreign officers who entered, the more we were delighted. . . .

"Just before the sovereigns entered the imperial box, some young Frenchmen of our party went into the box and covered the imperial eagle, surmounting its draperies, with a white handkerchief. At the end of the performance these same young men shattered the eagle to pieces with hammers amidst our enthusiastic applause."

On April 11 Napoleon signed the Act of Abdication at Fontainebleau and soon afterwards was on his way to the Island of Elba. On May 3 Louis XVIII. entered the capital of France.

The Comtesse de Boigne describes this great event: "We went to see the entry of the King from a house in the Rue St. Denis," she writes. "The crowd was great, and most of the windows were decorated with garlands, mottoes, *fleur-de-lys*, and white banners.

"The foreigners had had the grace to confine their troops to barracks, as they had done during the entry of Monsieur. The town was consigned to the care of the National Guard, and the absence of foreign uniforms was refreshing to the eyes.

"The old Imperial Guard formed the escort of the royal procession. They advanced rapidly, silent and mournful, full of remembrances of the past; the shouts of 'Vive le Roi!' died away as they

moved forward. . . . The silence increased till soon we heard nothing but the monotonous click of their horses' hoofs, which echoed in our hearts.

AWAITING THE KING'S ENTRY

The sadness of these old warriors was truly contagious, [and] gave to the whole ceremony rather the appearance of the Emperor's funeral than that of the King's accession."

Maria Edgeworth, writing to a friend of the Royal entry, says that an eye-witness who had

stood close to a body of the soldiers told her he heard them call out repeatedly, "Vive l'Empereur! Vive Napoléon!" "Berthier," he said, "who rode before the King's carriage, did not dare to look at, or towards, the troops, but rode on with his eyes down." *

"The King," continues the Comtesse, "was in an open carriage, with Madame † at his side. . . . He wore a blue coat with very large epaulettes, and the blue order and badge of the Saint Esprit. . . . He presented Madame to the people with an affected and theatrical gesture. She took no part in these demonstrations, but remained impassive. Her red eyes gave the impression that she was crying. The people respected her silent grief and sympathised in it.

". . . The Duchesse d'Angoulême was the only member of the royal family of whom any remembrance existed. The younger generation knew nothing of our princes; but every one knew that Louis XVI., the Queen, and Madame Elizabeth had perished on the scaffold. To the crowd Madame was the orphan of the Temple prison, and upon her centred all the interest aroused by such tragic events."

Maria Edgeworth, writing to a relative, expresses her astonishment at the wonderful events that were

* Edgeworth MSS.
† The Duchesse d'Angoulême.

succeeding each other in France! "A revolution without bloodshed!" she exclaims; "Paris taken without being pillaged! The Bourbons, after all hope and reason for hope had passed, restored to their capital and their palaces!" And another English writer of mark—Mrs. Barbauld—commenting on the same events, exclaims: "France, proud France, gallant France, is a conquered country. I do not think we yet know her real inclinations; convulsed by a revolution, tyrannised over by a despot, and owing her deliverance to her very enemies—how she is humbled, how much she has suffered; but how much she has inflicted! The French, however, have a better chance for happiness with the mild imbecility of the Bourbons than with Napoleon."

A friend, writing to Miss Berry from Paris on May 11, says: "Paris is certainly at this moment the most wonderful show-box in the world. It has within its walls as many live emperors, kings and generals, and eminent persons of all kinds, as the ingenious Mrs. Salmon ever exhibited in wax. Of the five great sovereigns of the Christian world, four are here actually present; and we have every eminent military commander in Europe except Buonaparte and Bernadotte. I say nothing of princes and prime ministers, though they are here in plenty."

In the month of June the Allied sovereigns quitted

Paris, and the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, General Blucher and many other distinguished persons visited England. The Emperor Alexander was extremely popular here as being not only our ally, but the head of a nation which had actually set fire to its ancient capital to enforce the retreat of Napoleon and his invading army. Mrs. Stanley writes from London on June 16:* "Yesterday after church we went to the Park. It was a beautiful day. . . . Such a crowd of people I could not have conceived, and such an animated crowd. As the white plumes of the Emperor's Guard danced among the trees, the people all ran first to one side and then to the other. It was impossible to resist the example and we ran too, backwards and forwards over the same hundred yards four times, and were rewarded by seeing the Ranger of the Forest, Lord Sydney, get a good tumble, horse and all! We saw Lord Castlereagh almost pulled off his horse by congratulations, and [with] huzzahs as loud as the Emperor's; and a most entertaining walk we had. . . .

"One [person] says the Emperor is gone this way, and another that way . . . and all a foxhound's sagacity is necessary to scent him successfully, for he slips round by backways and in plain clothes."

* *See* "Before and After Waterloo."

No wonder the Emperor tried to escape, for the people were so wildly enthusiastic, we have been told by one who could remember this stirring time, that if they could arrest his progress but for an instant, they would crowd round his horse to kiss it!

"At our dinner," writes Mrs. Stanley, "Mr. Tennant said in his dry way that 'Have you seen the Emperor?' has entirely superseded the use of 'How do you do?'"

Blucher also came in for his share of the general ovation.

"In the morning Mr. Tennant had gone into a shop to buy some gloves, and whilst he was trying them on the shopman suddenly exclaimed, 'Blucher! Blucher!' cleared the counter at a leap, followed by all his apprentices, and Mr. Tennant remained soberly amongst the gloves to make his own selection, for he saw nothing more of his dealers!"

"It is in vain," writes the sedate Mrs. Barbauld, "even to bespeak a pair of shoes—not a man will work. . . . Everybody has been idle since these royal personages came amongst us.

"Will not you come to London," she asks her correspondent, "to see all these sights? You are much mistaken if you think that you shall find us anxiously speculating about the liberties of Europe. We shall be squeezing to get a sight of Alexander

. . . looking at the Prince's fireworks and criticising the Oldenburg hat!"

So great was the enthusiasm throughout the British Isles for the Emperor of Russia, that an old Fifeshire woman living in the remote village of Cairnayhill sent him a present of a pair of stockings, knitted for him by herself, together with a Bible. These gifts, we are told, were kindly and graciously acknowledged by the Emperor.

"At the reception at Sir Joseph Banks' house last night," writes Mrs. Stanley, "the most interesting object of the evening was a sword come down from heaven on purpose for the Emperor! Let the Prince Regent and his garters, and the merchants and the aldermen and everybody, hide their diminished heads! What are they and their gifts to the Philosophers?

"This is literally a sword made by Sowerby from the iron from some meteoric stone lately fallen—of course in honour of the Emperor!"

CHAPTER XVIII

NAPOLEON AT THE TUILERIES AGAIN

"EARLY in the year 1815, a Congress of eight of the principal European Powers assembled at Vienna," writes a learned historian, "to regulate the affairs of Europe; but they had not proceeded far in their labours when they were astonished with the intelligence that Buonaparte had escaped from Elba!"

In the *Times* of March 11 we read: "Early yesterday morning we received by express from Dover, the important but lamentable intelligence of a civil war having been again kindled in France by that wretch Buonaparte. . . . He sailed from Elba with all his guards between 12 and 1300 in number on the night of the 28th ult., and landed near Fréjus in France on the 3rd instant."

Napoleon had really landed on March 1, so that ten days had elapsed before the "Dover express" brought the news to England.

A friend, writing to Miss Berry from Nice on March 3, says:

Napoleon at the Tuileries Again

"The day before yesterday Buonaparte landed at, or near, Cannes, with five, six or eight hundred soldiers and two pieces of cannon. He met with no obstacle. . . . He proceeded to Grasse . . . but set off about the middle of the day yesterday, and reached, it is said, Castellane . . . the route to Gap and Grenoble; which route it is imagined he is to follow. Thus far is certain; the flying reports are that Buonaparte distributes proclamations, saying he is come to the liberation of his faithful subjects, that the eagles are on the wing, will perch from spire to spire, and soon reach those of Nôtre Dame. . . . The Prince of Monaco was detained by a party of Buonaparte's soldiers on his road here; they led him to Buonaparte, who asked him where he was going. 'Home,' was his reply. 'So am I,' rejoined the other. . . .

"One is as astonished at this event," remarks the writer, "as if it had not been in the least probable [but] how could anybody suppose it would have been otherwise? They whipped the naughty boy, and put him in a corner, and supposed he would stay there!"

Mme. d'Arblay has described the effect produced in Paris by the tidings of Buonaparte's landing. "Wonder at his temerity," she says, "was the impression made by the news, but wonder unmixed with apprehension. . . . A torpor indescribable, a species of stupor utterly indefinable,

seemed to have enveloped the capital with a mist that was impervious. Everybody went about their affairs, made or received visits, met and parted, without speaking, or, I suppose, thinking of this event as of a matter of any importance. My own participation in this improvident blindness is to myself incomprehensible."

But the very King himself it seems shared in this blindness.

"When Louis XVIII. received the diplomatic corps on March 7," writes a newspaper correspondent, "his Majesty said to the ambassadors, 'Write to your respective courts that I am well, and that the foolish enterprise of *that man* shall as little disturb the tranquillity of Europe as it has disturbed mine.'"

At last the danger began to be realised. "Brief," writes Mme. d'Arblay, "was the illusion, and fearful was the light by which its darkness was dispersed. In a few days we heard that Buonaparte, whom we had concluded to be, either stopped at landing and taken prisoner, or forced to save himself by flight, was, on the contrary, pursuing unimpeded his route to Lyons."

It was now evident to all that the French troops could not be relied upon to resist his advance. A writer to the *Times* of March 23 says: "The insanity of looking up to the fiend Buonaparte as a tutelary deity is contagious amongst them. He

flatters their basest passions, inflames their most violent prejudices, holds out to them fruitful harvests of glory and plunder, promises to gratify their revenge, and to wipe away their feelings of past disgrace; in short, he acts the tempter so effectually that the loyalty and honour of the soldiery have, in general, been found to be feeble preservatives against corruption."

"His march," says another writer, "has been a triumphal procession. He has nowhere experienced the slightest resistance, and the only bloodshed has been that of General Marchand at Grenoble, who was shot by his soldiers on account of his fidelity to Louis XVIII."*

On the night of March 19, the King fled from Paris, and the following night Napoleon took possession of the city and was installed once more in the palace of the Tuileries, as Emperor of the French.

Napoleon now felt the necessity of getting persons of standing in the country to uphold his rule; and he had the temerity to write to Mme. de Staël, formerly the object of his persistent persecution, to beg her to come to Paris, "as her presence was required for constitutional ideas." "You have done without a constitution," she replied, "and without me for twelve years, and even

* *See* "Pope of Holland House," edited by W. P. Courtney.

now you are not more fond of one than of the other."

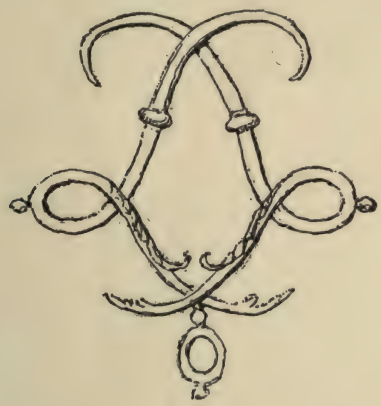
His overtures to her friend Benjamin Constant, in spite of seeming difficulties, proved more successful. This gentleman had just written a lampoon against the late Emperor, which happened to appear in the *Moniteur* the very day before Napoleon made his entry into Paris.

"When poor Benjamin became aware of this," writes the Comtesse de Boigne, "terror seized upon his heart, which was by no means of as lofty a nature as his head. He flew to the posting-houses—no horses to be had—diligences and mail-coaches crammed with fugitives, there was no means of quitting Paris. Thus baffled he took refuge in an obscure lodging where he hoped to remain undiscovered. Judge then of his dismay when the next morning he was sent for by Fouché! More dead than alive Constant obeyed the summons. Fouché received him very politely, and informed him that the Emperor desired to see him at once. This seemed strange, but still he felt somewhat reassured. On reaching the Tuileries all doors opened before him.

"The Emperor accosted Benjamin in the most gracious manner, begged him to be seated, and then opened the conversation by assuring him that his own past experiences had had their due effect upon his mind. During his long watches in the

Island of Elba he had reflected deeply upon his own situation and upon the needs of the time; men were evidently desiring liberal institutions. The mistake of his administration, he said, had been the neglect of publicists such as M. Constant. A constitution was required and he intended to apply to the chief lights of the Empire for its formation.

"Benjamin thus passed, in the space of one half-hour, from the fear of a dungeon to the joy of being summoned to play the part of a lesser Solon. . . . The author of the article in the *Moniteur* of March 19 became a State Councillor on the 22nd and Buonaparte's most ardent advocate."



CHAPTER XIX

THE GREAT ENCOUNTER

Louis XVIII. was attended in his flight by his Garde du Corps in which M. d'Arblay was a general officer. Mme. d'Arblay, in company with her friend the Princesse d'Hénin, quitted Paris the same day as the King (March 19). She describes vividly in her "Diary" their hurried journey to the frontier with all its painful incidents.

"No one knew," she says, "where the King was seeking shelter; no one knew whether he meant to resign his crown in hopeless inaction, or whether to contest it in sanguinary civil war. Every family, therefore, with its every connexion in the whole empire of the French, was involved in scenes upon which hung prosperity or adversity, reputation or disgrace, honour or captivity." For the time being the provinces were under no authority. "No orders were sent to them by either party. The King and his government were too imminently in personal danger to assert their rights. Buonaparte and his followers and supporters were too much engrossed

by taking possession of the capital, and too uncertain of their success, to try a power which had as yet no basis. . . . The people, as far as we could see or learn, seemed passively waiting the event."

Buonaparte, apparently oblivious of what the countries of Europe had suffered at his hands, issued a proclamation addressed to each of the crowned heads beginning with the words, "Sire my brother," but they declined to have anything to do with this would-be brother.

It was found that the King had fled first to Lille, and afterwards to Ghent; but Brussels was the seat of rendezvous for many of the French royalists and also for the British, both military and civil. Here Mme. d'Arblay found shelter, and here she was occasionally joined by her husband when he could be spared from his arduous duties. She lodged in the Place du Marché-aux-Bois.

Early in May, she tells us, a grand concert was given in the city, being the benefit of the celebrated singer Mme. Catalani. On this occasion she saw for the first time the Duke of Wellington, and was "struck with his noble and singular physiognomy. . . ." "He was gay even to sportiveness," she says, and "seemed enthusiastically charmed with Catalani, ardently applauding whatsoever she sang except 'Rule Britannia.' Then with sagacious reserve, he listened in utter silence

. . . and when an encore began to be vociferated from his officers, he instantly crushed it by a commanding air of disapprobation."

Five weeks later, on Friday, June 16, Mme. d'Arblay writes: "I was awakened at about five o'clock in the morning by the sound of a bugle horn in the Marché-aux-Bois. I started up and opened the window. But I only perceived some straggling soldiers hurrying in different directions, and saw lights gleaming from some of the chambers in the neighbourhood; all again was soon still . . . and I retired once more to my pillow."

A few hours later she found the whole town in a state of commotion and excitement. It was known that Buonaparte's army had crossed the Belgian frontier, and the great battle had already begun. News, she tells us, was arriving incessantly from the scene of action with ever-varying details, but Buonaparte was always said to be advancing—and advancing upon Brussels. A panic began to spread among the English residents. Madame d'Arblay's situation, as being the wife of a general officer in the Garde du Corps of Louis XVIII., was especially critical. Some friends urged her to fly with them to Antwerp and an attempt was made to do so, but in vain. All available horses and vehicles and even the very barges on the canal had been taken possession of by other fugitives or put in requisition by the

military authorities. It was found impossible to quit Brussels.

"What a day of confusion and alarm," writes Mme. d'Arblay, "did we spend on the 17th! That day and the 18th I passed in hearing the cannon." At one time a Hanoverian troop of Huzzars galloped through the town crying out that the Allied army was defeated and the French in hot pursuit. Mme. d'Arblay did not hear their words, but she was startled by the "sound of a howl, violent, loud, affrighting, issuing from many voices." "I ran to the window," she writes, "and saw the Marché-aux-Bois suddenly filling with a populace, pouring in from all its avenues, and hurrying on rapidly . . . while women with children in their arms or clinging to their clothes ran screaming out of doors; I saw windows closing and shutters fastening. This was followed, in another [moment], by a burst into my apartment to announce the *French were come!*

"How terrific," she exclaims, "was this moment! . . . I crammed my papers and money into a basket, and throwing on a shawl and bonnet I flew downstairs and out of doors . . .* I determined to fly to the house of Mme. de Maurville, who had promised to receive me as a part of her

* The remainder of Mme. d'Arblay's narrative is taken from an unpublished letter with the exception of the short sentence within brackets.

own house [hold] by the name of Mme. de Burney. In traversing the streets the disorder and despair strongly affected me. . . . There could be no stronger proof of the real horror which Buonaparte inspired.

"With Mme. de Maurville I remained shut up till about ten o'clock at night, witnessing from the window incessant arrivals of wounded, maimed, ill or dying; on foot, on horse, on brancards, in carts, and in waggons!—a sight to break one's heart. . . . The door was never opened but I felt myself . . . chill with fear of some sanguinary attack.

"[The dearth of any positive news from the field of battle at this crisis, when everything that was dear . . . was at stake, was . . . distracting in its torturing suspense. . . . 'Retreat' and 'defeat' were the words in every mouth around me! . . .] At last an English gentleman, belonging to some army office, came to tell us he *thought* all was going well. He was just returned from the field of battle, and said the report that had so dreadfully alarmed the town of the arrival of *des Français* was true, though without alarm; for *des Français* were indeed by hundreds arrived—as prisoners!"

These prisoners afterwards declared that Napoleon had cried out continually to them during the battle: "A Bruxelles, mes enfants! à Bruxelles! à Bruxelles!"

On returning home Mme. d'Arblay found that her friends were still making arrangements to escape to Antwerp, and they pressed her to accompany them. Whilst the matter was under debate, a certain Captain Marshall came into the room.

"He told me," writes Mme. d'Arblay, "that he did not think there was any danger for Brussels that day (Monday).

"'Then,' quoth I, 'there can be none at all! for if Buonaparte does not obtain Brussels by a *coup de main*, he can only obtain it by the loss of Paris—since if he stays longer away the Allies will enter in his absence, and the victory of a town will cost him a kingdom.'

". . . The D. of Wellington," she continues, "is just gone back to the army. He came hither yesterday when the battle was over, and the long pursuit in progress of Buonaparte, who has, however, escaped once more; but so beaten that how he will be received in France, or whether received at all, is doubtful.

". . . Meanwhile the D. of Fitzjames is commissioned to go from the Duke to Louis XVIII. to advise his Majesty *de se rendre à Tournai*, and thence to go at once into France. . . .

"How astonishing! The Duke then thinks his great battle already decisive!"

No one dared as yet to cherish this idea.

An officer in the British army writes from the Bivouac near Cateau on June 22: "The fate of Europe has perhaps been decided in one battle. . . . We are moving on with the Prussians, and the French are still flying. The fugitive will be driven to Paris, for I really do not think he will be able to face us at Laon." *

We have a glimpse of Napoleon in his flight from the pen of Alexandre Dumas.† Dumas, then a child, was in the village of Villers-Cotterets on June 21, where just nine days earlier he had seen Napoleon pass on his way to Belgium in military state, and amid the shouts of "Vive l'Empereur!"

"At seven o'clock in the morning of the 21st," he tells us, "a courier, covered with mud, dashed into the village. He drew rein for an instant at the posting-house, and ordered four horses to be in readiness for a carriage that was quickly following and without giving one word of explanation dashed off again.

"The four horses were taken out of the stables, and harnessed ready for the expected carriage. A heavy rumble, that grew louder and louder, announced its rapid approach and soon we saw it appear round the corner of the street and stop at the inn door.

* *See* "Pope of Holland House."

† "Mes Mémoires," par Alexandre Dumas, pub. 1852.

"The innkeeper advanced and stood stupefied. I took hold of his coat-tails and asked, 'Is it he? Is it the Emperor?'

"'Yes.'

"It was indeed the Emperor, just in the same place and in the same carriage, with an aide-de-camp beside him and another opposite.

"But these men were neither Jérôme nor Letort.

"Letort was killed, and Jérôme was commissioned to rally the army near Laon.

"It was just the same man, it was just the same pale, sickly impassive face, but his head was bent rather more down upon his breast; was it from mere fatigue? or was it from grief at having staked the world and lost it?

He raised his head, as on the former occasion, on feeling the carriage draw up, and cast around him the same vague look, which became so piercing when it was fixed upon a human face, or scanned the horizon—those two mysterious elements behind which danger might always be lurking.

"'Where are we?' he asked.

"'At Villers-Cotterets, sire.'

"'Good! eighteen leagues from Paris?'

"'Yes, sire.'

"'Go forward.'

"That same night Napoleon slept at the Elysée.

"It was exactly three months to the day since he

had re-entered the Tuileries on his return from the Island of Elba.

"Only between March 20 and June 20 an abyss had opened which had swallowed up his fortunes.

"That abyss was Waterloo!"

CHAPTER XX

AFTER WATERLOO

Miss Berry writes in her Journal of June 21 (1815): "Mr. Fazakerley brought the news of the great battle of the 18th in Flanders, between Buonaparte and Wellington, from which we have come out covered with glory, and gained a victory which one must hope will be decisive, as it has been bought with a great loss of blood. The news arrived in London at 11 o'clock at night by a carriage in which were seen the French eagles and the French standards. The carriage went to the Minister's house, and all the world was out of doors the best part of the night, asking news of their neighbours."

During the time that it was known throughout the nation that a great battle must be in progress, the state of public tension was almost unendurable. In one of our large Midland towns, we have been told by one who could remember the event, that crowds of people went far out on the London Road to get the first glimpse of the mail-coach that must bring

tidings of success or defeat. When at last the coach appeared turning a distant corner of the road, behold, it was covered with green boughs in token of victory!

Another contemporary of those stirring times writes:

"I can just recollect the rejoicings for the peace after the Battle of Waterloo, though I must have been very little, as I was carried on my uncle's shoulder about the streets to see the illuminations. . . . Every one seemed wild with joy at that time, and the names of everything were changed to Waterloo and Wellington wherever it was possible. The grand bridge was opened, and the universal colour was blue, down to my little new shoes."*

Miss Edgeworth describes a Lord Mayor's feast given at Drogheda in honour of the occasion. She says she hears that the assembled worthies partook of an incredible profusion of turtle soup, venison, geese, gurnets, &c., and that "in the centre of each long table there was placed a fine figure of Wellington and another of Blucher, made of sugared paste, in full coloured regimentals!"

The Allies took possession of Paris on July 6, and two days later Louis XVIII. re-entered the city and resumed the government. In the meantime Napoleon, finding all means of escape from

* "Memories of Seventy Years," edited by Mrs. Herbert Martin.

France were cut off by the British cruisers, had given himself up a prisoner to the [captain of H.M.S. *Bellerophon* lying off Rochefort.

Miss Berry, in her journal of the 26th instant, remarks that she has just been reading in the papers "Captain Maitland's letter announcing the arrival of Napoleon Buonaparte upon his vessel [now] at Torbay. Wonderful event!" she exclaims, "whoever should have predicted this six months ago would have been thought fit for a madhouse!"

Many Englishmen were now hurrying to Paris. One of these writes: "The Champs Elysées presented a curious scene. It was covered with tents, horses picketed by thousands, innumerable troops (mostly British) of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, while the Place Louis XV., as well as the Gardens of the Tuileries, was crowded with English and foreign officers, well-dressed females, and Parisian beaux."

Wellington had no easy task, it seems, in curbing the desire of some of his Allies to commit acts of vengeance. "Blucher was for pulling down the column in the Place Vendôme and for blowing up the bridge of Jena." "In spite of all I could do," remarked the Duke to a friend, "he did make the attempt, even while, I believe, my sentinel was standing at one end of the bridge. But the Prussians had no experience in blowing up bridges.

. . . They made a hole in one of the pillars, but their powder blew out instead of up, and I believe hurt some of their own people."*

A grand review of the Allied armies was held on July 24. "When the Highland regiments came up," writes an eye-witness, "playing their bagpipes, the attention of the foreign princes seemed particularly directed to them from the novelty of their dresses. They played their favourite national airs as they passed. The band of the brave 42nd Regiment played 'I'll gang na mair to yon town.' Sir Robert Macara, who commanded this corps in the battle of the 16th of June, was killed, with two-thirds of the officers and men, on that memorable day. It was melancholy to see how thin some of our regiments were."†

The Duke of Wellington gave a State ball on August 18 in his residence, formerly the mansion of General Junot. This mansion is still to be seen standing in the Rue Boissy d'Anglas (No. 12), a street at the north-western corner of the Place de la Concorde. In 1815 it was known as the Rue des Champs Elysées. The house is conspicuous in having a trophy of arms sculptured beneath its central pediment. The Duke's ball, owing to its

* "Conversations with the Duke of Wellington," by Earl Stanhope.

† "Paris during the interesting Month of July 1815," by W. D. Fellowes.

RESIDENCE OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON IN PARIS

extraordinary assemblage of celebrated guests of every description, must have been one of the most memorable gatherings on record. Happily a description of it exists, written by a gentleman who was himself one of the guests—Mr. James Simpson of Edinburgh.*

Mr. Simpson, after his own presentation, fell into the crowd behind the Duke to watch the arrival of the company. "As we gazed with intense curiosity at the door," he writes, "nobles, statesmen, generals, marshals, entered in rapid succession. Amidst a splendid display of [British] scarlet, mingled with rich foreign uniforms, was a profusion of the [white] uniform of Austria. . . . Diamonds blazed, and stars, crosses and ribbons were seen in every direction. 'Son Altesse le Prince de Benevento' was announced, and for the first time I saw close to me the celebrated Talleyrand. The wily politician's appearance surprised us. All seemed old-beau-like about him—a powdered old-fashioned gentleman. But we did not allow his countenance to go unscrutinised; and we saw, or thought we saw, in its very calm and mildness, the practised tranquillity of the prince of diplomatists.

"The Duke of Otranto, Fouché, soon followed, and we beheld the minister of police, the mover of the most tremendous engine of tyranny known to

* *See* "Paris after Waterloo," by James Simpson.

modern times, [who] had exercised a sway of terror not exceeded by Napoleon's own.

"A bustling cortège of officers and aides-de-camp, with a veteran at their head, was explained by the announcement, 'Son Altesse Sérénissime le Prince Blucher.' On his entry there was a rush to gaze upon him, and a strong feeling experienced when the Duke of Wellington met him half-way down the *salon*, with a hearty shake of both hands. Walter Scott [who was present] was, I remember, moved to tears, and said to me, 'Look at that—a few weeks ago these two men delivered Europe!'

". . . In louder accents than usual we heard the following announcement: 'Sa Majesté le Roi de Prusse, leurs Altesses Royales les Princes Royals de Prusse, le Duc de Mecklembourg.' The King entered with his splendid cortège. . . . The Prince of Orange followed, pale from his recent wound, and with his arm in a sling.

". . . After all had assembled there was no figure present which commanded a larger share of attention than the Duke of Wellington. His person was new to the majority of the company . . . and there was an eagerness to get his form into the memory by studying it well. The most powerful sovereigns in Europe seemed to shrink beside this son of an English baron.

"One of the most striking and significant features of the scene," continues the writer, "was the

appearance of a portrait of Napoleon which had been recently finished for Junot; and was left leaning against the wall in one of the rooms . . . so that the fallen Emperor also seemed to form a part of the company. I saw the King of Prussia and one or two other personages whose fates had been strangely connected with his, stand for a few seconds before the portrait remarking on the fidelity of the likeness. At this time the original was on his passage to St. Helena, discrowned and a prisoner, while here was one of his palaces occupied in triumph by his conquerors . . . who were employing themselves in criticising his portrait, which was all that remained of him. Walter Scott observed to me that if he should venture in fiction to depict such a scene as was here presented to our eyes, with all its circumstances and associations, brilliant, noble and affecting, he should be charged with unpardonable exaggeration."

A friend, writing to Miss Berry, from Paris, in August, says: "The French cut their jokes as usual. At the Duke of Wellington's ball the women talked of having danced *sur le tombeau de la patrie;* and they call the King, Louis *l'inévitable.* Mdlle. Mars reappears to-night, and Talma to-morrow. The most ridiculous, and the most characteristic, thing is a ballet at the Opera, and the excessive applause it has. The story is the

Battle of Waterloo; the scene, Paris; the Imperial Guards beaten, come back and inform the National Guards of their disaster. A young lady hears that her lover is killed, but an English officer arrives with him, having saved his life, upon which *tous danse à propos de tout*, with white lilies; and plenty of Scotchmen are introduced, which puts the audience in raptures."

"The Highlanders were quite a spectacle at Paris," writes Simpson. "Their tartans, bonnets, and plumes were very much admired, and were imitated even by the ladies."

Another Englishman in Paris, writing of a visit to the Tuileries, says: "The throne and canopy which Napoleon occupied but three weeks since, remain as he left them. The bedroom in which Louis sleeps is precisely as he found it. The letter N., with the imperial crown and eagle, are in almost every panel and corner of the palace." On his pointing out this latter circumstance to a Frenchman present, the Frenchman with ready wit observed:

"Voyant partout au Palais des Tuileries des N., un plaisant répondit, il y a des N— mis partout." *

It soon became generally known that the Emperor of Austria had laid claim to all the art treasures seized and carried away from his Italian States by

* "Paris during the interesting Month of July 1815," by W. D. Fellowes.

Napoleon, and that the Pope had also laid claim to those taken away from the States of the Church. In the meantime other potentates had followed their example, and had sent Ministers to Paris to press their demands.

Just as these claims were, the act of restitution greatly irritated the Parisians, as is shown by the following letter from the Comtesse de Boigne.

"Our hero, the Duke of Wellington," she writes, "took upon himself to carry out the spoliations demanded by the Allies. The English having no claims of the kind to make, he was sufficiently generous as to act on behalf of his allies and to take down the pictures from our museums with his own victorious hands. This expression is not mere rhetoric, but describes the actual fact. He was seen on a ladder himself setting the example to the workmen. When the horses from Venice were taken down from the arch of the Carrousel he spent a whole morning perched upon the arch superintending their removal.

"In the evening of that same day the Duke was present at a small reception given by Mme. de Duras to the King of Prussia. We could not conceal our indignation, but he made a joke of it and only laughed at us."

At the time of the first entry of the Allies into Paris, in 1814, many of the art treasures seized by Napoleon as spoils of war were missing from the

galleries, having been concealed by the Buonapartists. Maria Edgeworth, writing playfully on this subject to her aunt Mrs. Ruxton, remarked: "I daresay it has not escaped my aunt that the Venus de Medicis and the Apollo Belvedere are both missing together. I make no remarks. I hate scandal—at least I am not so fond of it as the lady of whom it was said she could not see the poker and tongs standing together without suspecting something wrong!"

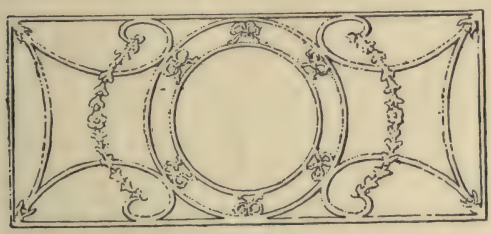
The Rev. Edward Stanley, who visited Paris some months later, says:

"Where are the French? Nowhere—all is English; English carriages fill the streets; at the Play, at the Hotels, Restaurations, in short everywhere John Bull stalks incorporate. We are not popular. I suppose the sight of us must be grating to the feelings. We are like a blight on an apple-tree; we curl up their leaves and they writhe under our pressure.

"About the Tuileries, indeed, and here and there a few *bien poudrés* little old men, *des bons papas du temps passé*, may be seen, dry as mummies and as shrivelled, with their ribbons and Croix St. Louis, tottering about. They are good staunch Bourbons, ready, I daresay, to take the field *en voiture;* for once, when taunted by the Imperial officers for being too old and decrepit to lead troops, an honest emigrant Marquis replied that he did not see why he should not command a regiment and lead it on *dans son cabriolet!*"

After Waterloo

Sir Walter Scott, writing from Paris in September 1815, remarks: "France is at present the fabled giant, struggling, or rather lying supine, under the load of mountains, which have been precipitated on her; but she is not, and cannot be crushed. Remove the incumbent weight of 600,000 or 700,000 foreigners and she will soon stand upright—happy, if experience shall have taught her to exert her natural strength only for her own protection, and not for the annoyance of her neighbours. . . . She will soon recover the actual losses she has sustained, for never was there a soil so blessed by nature, or so rich in corn, wine, and oil, and in the animated industry of its inhabitants."



CHAPTER XXI

LITERARY DAUGHTERS

THE following is an unpublished letter from Miss Edgeworth to the Miss Berrys, dated Edgeworthstown, April 3, 1816:*

"MY DEAR MISS BERRYS,—

"The very polite and kind attention you did me the honor to pay to a former note of introduction encourages me, as you see, to encroach upon your goodness and to venture to present to you another of my brothers—my eldest brother, Lovell Edgeworth—who has had so large a share of the evils of life that I cannot help wishing he should now enjoy as much as possible of its blessings, and of one of its best blessings, good society.

"He has been twelve † years a prisoner in France, detained by Buonaparte from the time of the breaking out of the war till the Allies entered Paris; so that he is a stranger almost in his own country, and

* From Mr. A. M. Broadley's collection of MSS.

† This is evidently a slip of the pen for "eleven."

till the present moment ill-health has prevented him from fully enjoying the contrast of the society in London and that to which he was condemned in France. May I hope that you will do him the honor and the favour to let him spend one evening in the delightful society at your house?

". . . We are all at this time happily engaged in reading a most entertaining book in the first page of which is written *From A. and M. Berry.* It was a present from the Miss Berrys to the late Mr. Malone, and, with all his valuable library, has come into the possession of his brother, Lord Sunderlin, who is our neighbour in this country. His Lordship has had the generosity—and I think it is great generosity—to trust this precious book to us. It is interleaved and furnished with prints of Mr. Malone's collecting of all the persons mentioned in the 'Reminiscences.'

"What a delightful companion Lord Orford must have been, and how much we are obliged to those who have preserved, in its full animation and elegance, the living spirit of his conversation. . . ,

"Believe me,

"Y^r^ obliged

"Maria Edgeworth."

The "Reminiscences" here mentioned were evidently Horace Walpole's "Reminiscences of the Courts of George I. and II.," which, as the title

announces, "was written in 1788 for the amusement of Miss Mary and Miss Agnes Berry."

In the opening chapter of the work the author thus addresses the Miss Berrys:

"You were both so entertained with the old stories I told you one evening of the Courts of George the First and of his son . . . George the Second . . . and you expressed such wishes that I would commit these passages . . . to writing, that having no greater pleasure than to please you both, nor any more important nor laudable occupation, I will begin to satisfy . . . your curiosity. . . . [But] I may only be indulging myself, and consequently wander into many digressions for which you will not care a straw. . . . Patience, therefore, young ladies; . . if you coin an old gentleman into narratives you must expect a good deal of alloy."

Miss Edgeworth, having read these words, would fully understand that it was the Miss Berrys' influence that had caused the "Reminiscences" to be given to the world; hence her prettily implied compliment to them.

Since the autumn of 1816 Mr. Edgeworth's health had been rapidly failing, but his interest in his daughter's writings remained as keen as ever. "He had expressed a wish to Maria," writes Mrs. Edgeworth, "that she should write a story as a companion to 'Harrington.'" She at once began to write her novel of "Ormond." "In all her anguish

of mind at his state of health, she, by a wonderful effort of affection and genius, produced those gay and brilliant pages—some of the gayest and most brilliant she ever composed. . . . The admirable characters of King Corny and Sir Ulick O'Shane, and all the wonderful scenes full of wit, humour and feeling, were written in an agony of anxiety, with trembling hand and tearful eyes. As she finished chapter after chapter, she read them out—the whole family assembling in her father's room to listen to them."

On June 13, 1817, Mr. Edgeworth died.

Maria's love of her father is well known. It influenced her whole life.

It is a curious circumstance that two celebrated contemporary authoresses—women differing widely in character from Miss Edgeworth—were equally conspicuous for their enthusiastic devotion to *their* fathers, namely, Mme. de Staël and Mary Russell Mitford. Mme. de Staël's devotion to the great Necker, and her pride in being his daughter, transpire continually in her writings; while Miss Mitford's ardent love is evinced as often for "her dear Papa" (in spite of all his shortcomings), whom she styles "her chief spoiler in childhood" and "her pleasantest companion at all times"; though she admits that "Mamma is my best friend."

A saying of Mme. de Staël's when a child, curiously enough, forms a parallel to this. Having

been reproved by her mother for some fault, she was found by a friend in tears. "Never mind," said her consoler, "your father will soon make you happy again." To which the little girl replied: "Papa thinks of my present pleasure, but Mamma of my future good."

The author of "Our Village" resembled Miss Edgeworth in another respect—her fondness for needlework—"that most effectual sedative," as she terms it, "that grand soother and composer of woman's distress"; and, as Miss Edgeworth calls it, "that valuable resource, sovereign against the root of all evil—an antidote both to love in idleness and hate in idleness."

But the authoress of "Corinne" was far from sharing in this taste. "I do not think," writes the Comtesse de Boigne, "that such a thing as a needle was to be found throughout the whole château of Coppet."

Maria, writing in 1805 to her brother Henry (then in Edinburgh) about a piece of her own needlework, says: "The worked sleeves are for Mrs. Stewart, and you are to offer them to her. . . . If Mrs. Stewart should begin to say, 'O! it is a pity Miss Edgeworth should spend her time in such work!' please to interrupt her speech, though that is very rude, and tell her that I like work very much, and that I have only done this at odd times, after breakfast you know, when my father reads

out Pope's 'Homer,' or when there are long sittings, when it is much more agreeable to move one's fingers than to have to sit with hands crossed or clasped immovably. I by no means accede to the doctrine that ladies cannot attend to anything else when they are working. . . . Does not Dr. Darwin show that certain habitual motions go on without interrupting trains of thought? And do not common sense and experience, whom I respect even above Dr. Darwin, show the same thing?"

Maria considered Dr. Darwin, we are told, not only to be "a first-rate genius, but one of the most benevolent as well as wittiest of men." It seems to us that he must have been the prototype for the Dr. X. who appears in "Belinda," and also in other tales by Maria, and who is always the mouthpiece of much wisdom and dry humour.

We are tempted to introduce here an amusing passage in a letter written at Edgeworthstown.

Maria, having been indisposed, was left at home for rest and quiet while her family went to an evening party. During their absence she had been so happily engaged in writing to her aunt Mrs. Ruxton that she had altogether forgotten the passage of time.

"Here comes the carriage rolling round," she concludes. "I feel guilty, what will my mother say to me, so long a letter at this time of night?

Yours affectionately, in all the haste of guilt, conscience-stricken; that is found out. No—all safe, all innocent—because *not* found out! Finis. By the Author of 'Moral Tales' and 'Practical Education.'"

CHAPTER XXII

THE "MANUSCRIT DE SAINTE-HÉLÈNE"

In the winter of the year 1817 the "Manuscrit de Sainte-Hélène," published by Murray, suddenly made its appearance, creating a widespread sensation.

Miss Edgeworth writes to a relative: "I agree with you in thinking the 'MS. de Sainte-Hélène' a magnificent performance. My father was strongly of opinion that it was not written by Buonaparte himself, and he grounded his opinion chiefly upon the passages relative to the Duc d'Enghien: *c'était plus qu'un crime, c'était une faute.* But it may be observed in the Buonaparte system of morality which runs through the book, nothing is considered what we call a crime unless it be what he allows to be a fault. . . . *Le cachet de Buonaparte* is as difficult to imitate as *le cachet de Voltaire.* I know of but three people in Europe who could have written it: Madame de Staël, Talleyrand, or M. Dumont. Madame de Staël, though she has the ability, could not have got so plainly and shortly

through it. Talleyrand has *l'esprit comme un démon*, but he could not, for the soul of him, have refused himself a little more wit and wickedness. Dumont has not enough audacity of mind."

In a letter from John Murray to Lord Byron dated March 20, 1817, the writer says: "I have just received, in a way perfectly unaccountable, a MS. from St. Helena—with not one word. I suppose it to be originally written by Buonaparte or his agents. . . . I call it therefore simply *Manuscrit venu de S^te^ Hélène d'une manière inconnue.*"* Shortly after its appearance the "Manuscrit" was translated into English and published in New York. The work opens with the following words:

"My life has been so wonderful that the admirers of my greatness have imagined that even my infancy must have been extraordinary. They were mistaken. The first years of my life were marked by no uncommon circumstances. I was an obstinate and inquisitive child. My early education was as wretched as everything else in Corsica. I acquired the French language with facility from the officers of the garrison with whom I spent my time.

"I succeeded in whatever I undertook because I willed it. My resolution was strong and my character decided. I never hesitated, which has given me an advantage over the rest of mankind.

* "Memoir and Correspondence of the late Mr. John Murray," by S. Smiles.

Besides, the will depends upon the constitution of the individual. Every one is not master of his determination.

"My intellectual character made me hate illusions. I have always discerned the truth at a single glance. This is the reason why I have always penetrated the bottom of things with more facility than others. The world has been seen by me such as it is, not such as it ought to be. So also I have not resembled any one. I have been by nature an isolated being."

The Comtesse de Boigne gives us an interesting account of the arrival in Paris of the "MS. de Sainte-Hélène."

She herself was fairly puzzled, she tells us, as to its authenticity, but fearing in any case that it might act as a bombshell, in the midst of party strife, she hid her early copy out of sight and maintained a discreet silence on the subject. Presently she received an invitation from her Royalist friend, Mme. de Duras, to spend an evening at her house. "There I found," she writes, "an assemblage of about fifty people: a table placed in their midst with lighted candles and the usual glass of water for a reader. But from what book was the reading to be given?—The 'MS. de Sainte-Hélène'!"

The following evening the same scene was repeated at the house of the Duchesse d'Escars, one of the chief ladies of the Court of Louis XVIII.

"I was never present," she continues, "at a

reading of the kind before a gathering of Imperialists; but, to judge by the effect produced in our Bourbonist *salons*, it must have greatly stirred their hearts and sharpened anew their former animosities and regrets.

"Doubt of the authenticity of the manuscript soon became impossible, for those who had lived in the closest connection with the Emperor were the most positive in declaring it to be the work of his hand.

"M. de Fontanes recognised every phrase as his; M. Molé could hear the very sound of his voice in uttering the words; M. de Talleyrand could see him in the act of writing them down. Marshal Marmont discovered expressions belonging to his and Napoleon's youthful days which the Emperor alone could have made use of; and all were equally electrified by this direct communication from the great man. No work in my time," remarks the Comtesse, "ever created such a sensation."

In spite, however, of the mass of evidence in favour of its genuineness, the "MS. de Sainte-Hélène" proved, after all, to be an imposture. Napoleon denied its authorship; and the excitement gradually died away.

Many years elapsed, it seems, before it became known that the real author was a certain M. Lullin de Châteauvieux, a Swiss writer, known, not for any work of surprising genius dealing with men and manners, but for his works on agriculture!

CHAPTER XXIII

A HAMPSTEAD POETESS

In the autumn of 1818 Maria Edgeworth paid a visit to Joanna Baillie and her sister, who were living in the "village of Hampstead."

This place enjoyed a complete life of its own in those days, being connected with the great noisy city only by a highway which descended between green fields, with here and there some pleasant country-houses. The quaint High Street climbing towards the Heath contained private residences as well as shops. In the shops business was conducted in a dignified and leisurely style even to a much later date, and customers could catch glimpses through the back windows of sloping, sunny gardens, with the "sister hill of Highgate" in the distance.

Miss Edgeworth, who had been paying a visit at Epping, must have approached Hampstead from this "sister hill" before driving along the summit of the Heath, with its magnificent view that "smiles, miles and miles."

Writing from Hampstead, she says: "We had a delightful drive here yesterday from Epping, through various cheerful villages, and on Hampstead Heath numbers of riding-parties, children looking so happy. At one house we saw a group of white-robed ladies, mothers, aunts, and sisters, I am sure, just come out of their house without hat or bonnet, to see the first performance of a little urchin on a little long-tailed pony under a row of shady trees.

"Joanna Baillie and her sister came running down their little flagged walk to welcome us."

Bolton House, the Baillies' dwelling-place, on Windmill Hill, is still to be seen, with its dark brick walls and white window-frames, its "flagged walk" and sheltering elms, as Maria saw them ninety years ago.

"Both Joanna and her sister have such agreeable and new conversation," writes Maria, "not old trumpery literature over again, and reviews, but new circumstances worth telling, *à propos* to every subject that is touched upon: frank observations on character, without either ill-nature or the fear of committing themselves; no blue-stocking tittle-tattle, or habits of worshipping or being worshipped: domestic, affectionate, good to live with, and without fussing continually, doing what is most obliging, and whatever makes us feel most at home."

BOLTON HOUSE

How the pleasant chat must have flowed in the panelled parlour of Bolton House, and how often the name of Walter Scott must have been mentioned! It was but in the spring of this same year (1818) that Maria had received a letter from him in which he had said:

"You have had a merit—transcendent in my eyes—of raising your national character in the scale of public estimation, and making the rest of the British Empire acquainted with the peculiar and interesting character of a people too long neglected and too severely oppressed.

". . . I do not rate the unknown author of our Scottish tales," he goes on to say, "so high as to place him in the same rank either of merit or utility, and yet I think highly of many of his works, and expect to be gratified by those which are still promised from the same abundant and concealed source." *

The warm and intimate friendship that existed between Walter Scott and Joanna Baillie began in the year 1806, when we are told he first met the "poetess of Hampstead," of whose "Plays on the Passions" he was an enthusiastic admirer. When in later years Lockhart asked Miss Baillie what impression he had made upon her on that occasion, she answered: "I was at first a little

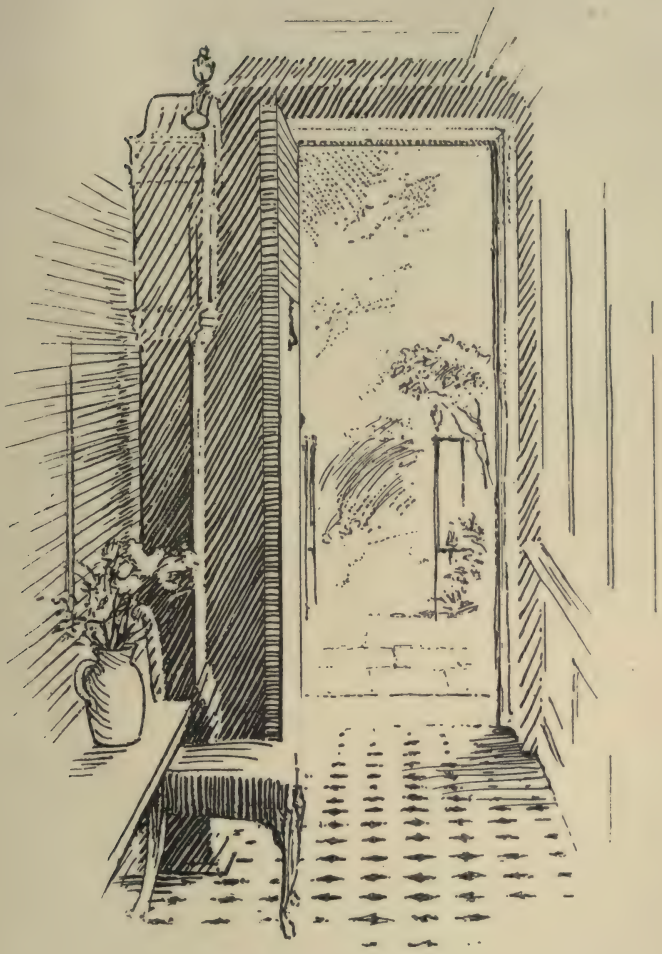
* "Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott," edited by David Douglas, 1894.

disappointed, for I was fresh from the 'Lay' and had pictured to myself an ideal elegance and refinement of feature; but I said to myself, if I had been in a crowd, and at a loss what to do, I should have fixed upon that face among a thousand, as the sure index of the benevolence and the shrewdness that would and could help me in my strait. We had not talked long, however, before I saw in the expressive play of his countenance far more even of elegance and refinement than I had missed in its mere lines."

In addition to her power of composing tragic dramas, Joanna Baillie "possessed a lyric vein." "She was endowed with that romantic touch which more than anything else made her genius akin to Scott's."* Of her lyrics the most widely known is the Outlaws' Chorus in the play of *Orra*, which the reader may remember as a part-song set to stirring music by Bishop. We are tempted to give the stanzas.

The chough and crow to roost are gone,
  The owl sits on the tree,
The hushed wind wails with feeble moan,
  Like infant charity;
The wild fire dances on the fen,
  The red star sheds its ray:
Uprouse ye, then, my merry men,
  It is our op'ning day.

* *See* Canon Ainger on Joanna Baillie.



THE ENTRANCE PASSAGE

Both child and nurse are fast asleep,
And closed is every flower,
And winking tapers faintly peep
High from my lady's bower;
Bewildered hinds, with shortened ken,
Shrink on their murky way:
Uprouse ye, then, my merry men,
It is our op'ning day.

Nor board nor garner own we now,
Nor roof nor latchèd door,
Nor kind mate bound by holy vow
To bless a good man's store;
Noon lulls us in a gloomy den,
And night is grown our day:
Uprouse ye, then, my merry men,
And use it as ye may.

When *Orra* appeared before the public in the autumn of 1811 Scott was engaged in composing his "Rokeby." "When I had read *Orra* twice to myself," he writes to Joanna, "Terry read it over to us a third time aloud, and I have seldom seen a little circle so much affected as during the whole fifth act. . . .

"Yet I have a great quarrel with this beautiful drama," he continues, "for you must know you have utterly destroyed a song of mine precisely in the turn of your outlaws' ditty, and sung by persons in somewhat the same situation. I took out my unfortunate manuscript to look at it; but alas! it was the encounter of the iron and the earthen pitchers in the fable. I was clearly sunk, and the potsherds not worth gathering up."

In fact, Scott at once remodelled his own song; and it is a curious circumstance that some years later, when "Guy Mannering" was dramatised and produced at Covent Garden Theatre, it was Joanna Baillie's "Chough and Crow" that was introduced as the gipsies' song, in preference to Scott's own composition.

Miss Lucy Aikin, a niece of Mrs. Barbauld, who knew the Miss Baillies well, writes of Joanna: "No one could have taken her for a married woman. An innocent maiden grace hovered over her to the end of old age. It was one of her peculiar charms. . . . If ever there were human creature 'pure to the last recesses of the soul,' it was surely this meek, this pious, this noble-minded and nobly gifted woman."

Mrs. Barbauld writes, after spending a few days with the Miss Baillies: "One should be, as I was, beneath their roof to know all their merit. Their house is one of the best ordered I know. They have all manner of attentions for their friends. . . . Joanna is as clever in furnishing a room or in arranging a party as in writing plays."

A pleasant recollection of these two ladies in their old-world home is still retained by a relative of the present writer. She was sent with her sister to Bolton House to leave a parcel for the Miss Baillies, who were friends of their parents. Joanna saw the children from an upper window, and came

out to welcome them and to invite them to come in. The ladies had just finished breakfast, and on the table there was some white currant jelly, which the children much appreciated. When the jelly

THE DINING-PARLOUR

was eaten Joanna fetched a bowl of water, that the little sticky fingers might be washed. She refilled it for the second little girl, remarking, "You mustn't both wash your hands in the same water, or you will quarrel before nightfall."

We learn that the authoress's study was on the first floor, behind the best parlour.

Mrs. Le Breton, in her interesting "Memories

of Seventy Years," tells us that "soon after the publication of the last volume of the 'Plays of the

JOANNA BAILLIE'S STUDY

Passions,' some of the Baillies' friends arranged for a Reading of one of them by an actress in the Holly Bush Assembly Rooms. These Rooms are

still to be seen in a quaint wooden building, divided by only a small green from the Baillies' house. The large room on the first floor where the reading took place was used formerly as a ball-room, and though serving other purposes now, it still retains its 'musicians' gallery,' its elegant fluted pilasters and its tall recessed windows."

Mrs. Bartley, who read the play, "performed her task with much effect and feeling. The large room was quite full. The two dear old ladies dressed alike in grey silk with pretty lace caps, came quietly in with the rest, Mrs. Joanna walking meekly behind her elder sister. Her friends understood her feelings too well to distress her by any public recognition of her presence, though she accepted their congratulations at the end with evident pleasure and simple dignity. . . .

"She told us in her quiet droll way that some of her old friends in Scotland were shocked at the line of writing she had taken to, and said she had seen in a letter from one—'Have ye heard that Jocky Baillie has taken to the *public line?*'"

CHAPTER XXIV

AN HONOURED WRITER

Miss Edgeworth occasionally stayed with other friends at Hampstead beside the Baillies—these were a Mr. and Mrs. Carr and their family, who lived at Maryon Hall, which stands at the top of Frognal Lane. "Frognal, delicious Frognal!" as Maria calls it. The house recently divided into two, was surrounded by large and beautiful grounds in Maria's day, which lay upon the slope of the hill.

It was about three years later than the visit to Bolton House and in mid-winter that Miss Edgeworth paid a visit to the Carrs. She was accompanied by her two young sisters, Fanny and Harriet.

"We have been enjoying in this family," she writes, "every delight which affection and cultivated tastes, and cheerful tempers can bestow. . . .

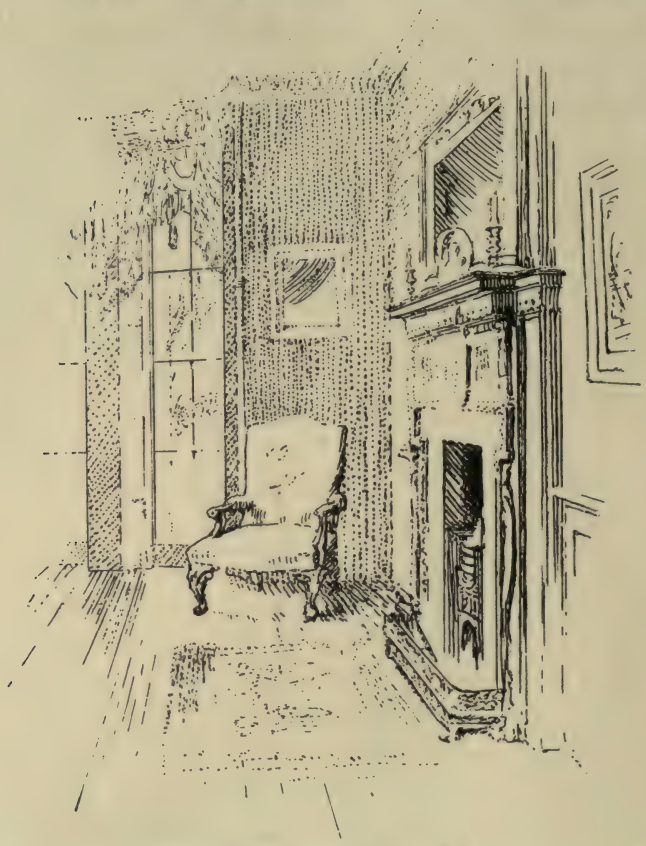
"New Year's Day was Mr. and Mrs. Carr's wedding-day, and it was kept as it always is, with family rejoicings. Dr. Holland and Joanna Baillie

and Miss Mulso, an intimate friend (a niece of Mrs. Chapone's) dined here, which with the whole family and ourselves made a party of twenty. Mr. Carr gave many toasts; some so affectionate they made the tears roll down the cheeks of his children.

"In the evening, a merry dance, in which Joanna and her sister joined, and then, as agreed upon at a given signal, we all ran up to our rooms and dressed in different characters. We did not know what the others were to be, but Fanny was a nun in a white muslin veil and drapery over her black gown—dressed in a moment, and I fell to decking Harriet, a pert travelled young lady, just returned from Paris, in the height of the fashion; feathers of all colours, gold diadem, a profusion of artificial flowers, a nosegay of vast size, rose-coloured gauze dress, darkened eyebrows and ringlets of dark hair which so completely altered her that no creature guessed who she was till Mrs. Carr, at last, knew her by her likeness to her mother; she supported her character with great spirit.

"I was an Irish nurse in a red cloak come all the way from Killogonsawee, 'for my two childer that left me last year for foreign parts.' Little Francis was Triptolemus in the 'Pirate,' an excellent figure, and Mrs. Carr, his sister Baby; Isabella, an old lady in an old-fashioned dress, and Laura as her daughter in a court dress and powder;

Anna, a French troubadour singing beautifully and speaking French perfectly; William, the youngest



THE DRAWING-ROOM, MARYON HALL

son, a half-pay officer, king of the coffee-house; Tom, a famous London black beggar, Billy Waters, with a wooden leg; Morton, Meg Merrilies; Dr.

Lushington, a housemaid; Miss Mulso, an English ballad-singer; Mr. Burrell (I forgot to mention him, an old family friend at dinner), as a Spanish gentleman, Don Pedro Velasquez de Tordesillas; very good ruff and feathers, but much wanting a sword when the wooden-legged black trod on his toes. In the scuffle of dressing, for which only ten minutes were allowed, no sword could be found.

"From the quickness of preparation, and our all being a family party, this little masquerade went off remarkably well."

When Miss Edgeworth visited the Baillies in 1818, Mrs. Barbauld had ceased to be a resident in Hampstead, though she was still connected with the place, as her near relatives the Aikins dwelt there from time to time, occupying a house, No. 8 Church Row. Maria, however, visited Mrs. Barbauld at Stoke Newington and remarks in a letter that she was "very kind and agreeable."

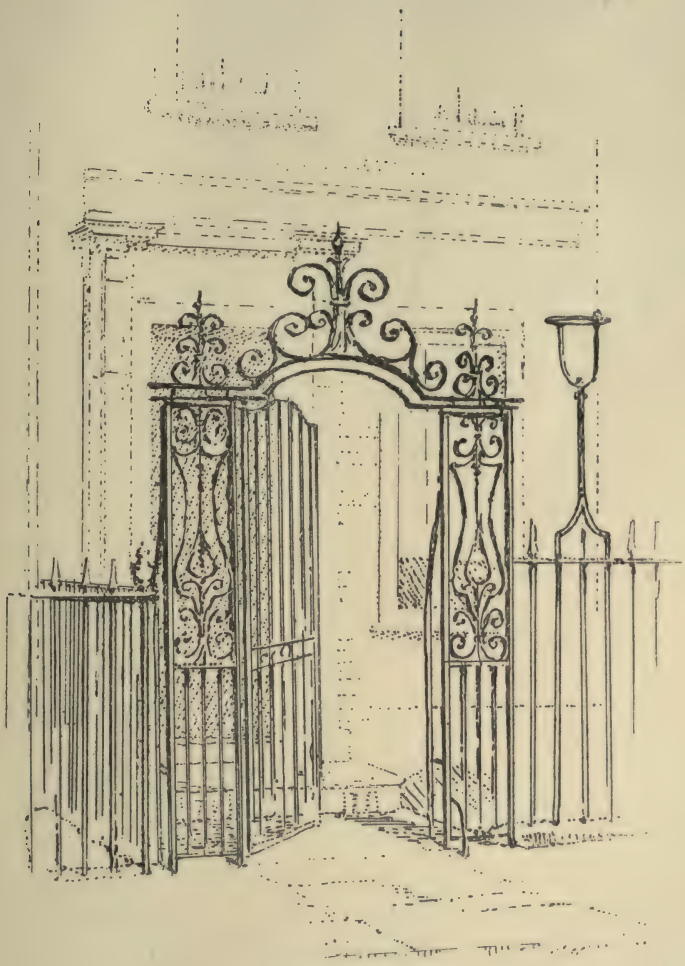
The two authoresses had been in correspondence with each other as early as the year 1810, when Mrs. Barbauld was preparing her collected edition of British Novelists, and desired to include in the series the tales of "Belinda" and "Griselda." She wrote to Miss Edgeworth on this occasion: "I may not to you expatiate on the variety, the invention, the spirit ever new and ever charming of your various publications, but I may congratu-

late you on having so much power and so much will to impress the heart with virtuous feelings, and by those modes of writing which are generally managed so as to enfeeble the mind, to gird it up for the real business and duties of life."

Maria Edgeworth in her turn warmly admired Mrs. Barbauld's works. She writes: "Elegance and strength—qualities rarely uniting without injury to each other, combine most perfectly in her style, and this rare combination, added to their classical purity, form, perhaps, the distinguishing characteristics of her writings."

Mrs. Barbauld, the reader may remember, had first become known as a writer when, in conjunction with her brother Dr. Aikin, she wrote the attractive stories of the "Evenings at Home." We owe to her pen, it seems, the little plays of *Alfred the Great in the Neatherd's Hut* and *King Canute rebuking the flattery of his Courtiers.* Canon Ainger, describing his childish memories of their representation, remarks: "How well does the present writer recall the feeding of his nascent histrionic ambitions in the title-rôles of these two engaging dramas, and how the relentless ocean was represented by a large blue dust-cloth, beneath which two other denizens of the nursery persistently rolled to produced the effect of the stormy billows."

In the year 1811, a period of deep gloom, when Napoleon was all-powerful on the Continent and



8 CHURCH ROW

ANNA LŒTITIA BARBAULD

when England stood alone to oppose him, Mrs. Barbauld wrote a striking poem entitled "1811." Her verses reflected not only the wide-spread public depression of the time, but also, unconsciously, her own personal state of melancholy upon the death of her husband. The poem was much censured by many persons, who considered it as discouraging to the nation in a time of great difficulty. This provoked "a very coarse review," we are told, in the *Quarterly*.

Miss Edgeworth wrote to Mrs. Barbauld: "I cannot describe to you the indignation, or rather the disgust, that we felt at the manner in which you are treated in the *Quarterly Review:* so ungentleman-like, so unjust, so insolent a review I never read. My father and I in the moment of provocation snatched up our pens to answer it, but a minute's reflection convinced us that silent contempt is the best answer—that we should not suppose it possible that it can hurt anybody with the generous British public, but the reviewers themselves. . . . The pnblic, the *public* will do you justice!"

Crabb Robinson, who was a friend of Mrs. Barbauld, thus describes her personal appearance in middle life: "She bore the remains of great personal beauty. She had a brilliant complexion, light hair, blue eyes, a small and elegant figure, and her manners were very agreeable with something of the generation then departing." He writes

in later years: "It was after her death that Lucy Aikin published Mrs. Barbauld's works, of which I gave a copy to Miss Wordsworth. Among the poems is a stanza on 'Life,' written in extreme old age. . . . It was long after I gave these works to Miss Wordsworth that her brother said, 'Repeat me that stanza by Mrs. Barbauld.' I did so. He made me repeat it again; and so he learnt it by heart. He was at the time walking in his sitting-room at Rydal, with his hands behind him, and I heard him mutter to himself, 'I am not in the habit of grudging people their good things, but I wish I had written those lines.'"

The poem referred to, that begins with the words—

> Life, I know not what thou art,
> But know that thou and I must part,

is happily well known, being included in our principal collections of lyric poetry.

We should like to insert here some verses written in a lighter vein, bearing the title:

LINES PLACED OVER A CHIMNEY-PIECE

> Surly Winter, come not here;
> Bluster in thy proper sphere:
> Howl along the naked plain,
> There exert thy joyless reign;
> Triumph o'er the withered flower,
> The leafless shrub, the ruined bower;
> But our cottage come not near;—
> Other springs inhabit here,

An Honoured Writer

Other sunshine decks our board,
Than the niggard skies afford.
Gloomy Winter, hence ! away !
Love and Fancy scorn thy sway ;
Love and Joy, and friendly Mirth,
Shall bless this roof, these walls, this hearth.
The rigour of the year controul,
And thaw the winter in the soul.

CHAPTER XXV

JOURNEYING HERE AND THERE

In the early part of the year 1819, Maria Edgeworth paid some visits to various friends residing in the English provinces.

She writes to Mrs. Ruxton, her "dearest, kindest, and most polite of Aunts" as she calls her, on January 20:

"I see my little dog on your lap, and feel your hand patting his head, and hear your voice telling him that it is for Maria's sake he is there. I wish I was in his place, or at least on the sofa beside you at this moment, that I might, in five minutes, tell you more than my letters could tell you in five hours.

"I have scarcely yet recovered from the joy of having Fanny actually with me, and with me just in time to go to Trentham, on which I had set my foolish heart. We met her at Lichfield. . . .

"When Honora and I had Fanny in the chaise to ourselves, ye gods! how we did talk! We arrived at Trentham by moonlight, and could

only just see outlines of wood and hills; silver light upon the broad water, and cheerful lights in the front of a large house, with wide open hall door. Nothing could be more polite and cordial than the reception given to us by Lady Stafford, and by her good-natured, nobleman-like lord.

"During our whole visit what particularly pleased me was the manner in which they treated my sisters: not as appendages to an authoress, not as young ladies merely *permitted*, or to fill up as *personnages muets* in society; on the contrary, Lady Stafford conversed with them a great deal, and repeatedly took opportunities of expressing to me how much she liked and valued them for their own sake. 'That sister Fanny of yours has a most intelligent countenance; she is much more than pretty. . . . They have both been admirably well educated.' Then she spoke in the handsomest manner of my father—'a master mind: even in the short time I saw him, that was apparent to me. . . .'

"I forgot to tell you that Lady Harrowby and her daughter were at Trentham, and an *exquisite*, or tiptop dandy, Mr. Standish. . . . The morning after Mr. Standish's arrival, Lady Stafford's maid told her that she and all the ladies'-maids had been taken by his *gentleman* to see his toilette—'which, I assure you, my lady, is the thing best worth seeing

in this house, all of gilt plate, and I wish my lady you had such a dressing-box.'

"Though an *exquisite*, Mr. Standish is clever, entertaining and agreeable. One day that he sat beside me at dinner, we had a delightful battledore and shuttlecock conversation from grave to gay as quick as your heart could wish: from *l'Almanac des Gourmands* and *Le respectable porc* to Dorriforth and the 'Simple Story.'"

By the month of March the Edgeworths had reached London, and were visiting Lady Elizabeth Whitbread at Kensington Gore.

Among their many engagements in town Maria mentions "Three breakfasts at dear Mrs. Marcet's —the first quite private, the second literary, very agreeable: Dr. Holland, Mr. Whishaw, Captain Beaufort, Mr. Mallet, Lady Yonge; third, Mr. Mill—British India—was the chief *figurant;* not the least of a *figurant*, though excellent in sense and benevolence.

"Twice at Mr. Wilberforce's; he lives next door to Lady Elizabeth Whitbread; there we met Mr Buxton—admirable facts from him about Newgate and Spitalfields weavers. . . . I was very sorry to learn that Mrs. Fry, that angel woman, was very ill."

Meeting Mrs. Somerville later on, Miss Edgeworth thus describes her: "Mrs. Somerville is the lady whom La Place mentions as the only woman in

England who understands his works. She draws beautifully; and while her head is among the stars, her feet are firm upon the earth."

"On St. Patrick's Day," continues Maria, "by appointment to the Duchess of Wellington; nothing could be more like Kitty Pakenham; a plate of shamrocks on the table, and as she came forward to meet me she gave a bunch to me, pressing my hand and saying in a low voice, with her sweet smile, 'Vous en êtes digne.'

"Presently the conversation turning upon Mme. de Staël, the Duchess said she had purposely avoided being acquainted with her in England, not knowing how she might be received by the Bourbons, to whom the Duchess was to be Ambassadress. She found that Madame de Staël was well received at the Bourbon Court and consequently she must be received at the Duke of Wellington's. Madame de Staël arrived, and, walking up in full assembly to the Duchess, with the fire of indignation flashing in her eyes:

"'Eh! Madame la Duchesse, vous ne voulez pas donc faire ma connaissance en Angleterre!'

"'Non, Madame, je ne le voulais pas.'

"'Eh! comment, Madame? Pourquoi donc?'

"'C'est que je vous *craignais*, Madame.'

"'Vous me *craignez*, Madame la Duchesse?'

"'Non, Madame, je ne vous crains plus.'

"Madame de Staël threw her arms round her, 'Ah! je vous adore!'"

In one of her earlier letters Miss Edgeworth says: "Madame de Staël calls Blenheim 'a magnificent tomb; splendour without and the death-like silence of *ennui* within.' She says she is very proud of having made the Duke of Marlborough speak four words. At the moment she was announced he was distinctly heard to say, 'Let me go away.'"

The celebrated taciturnity of this Duke might well have formed the subject of such another pamphlet as Maria alludes to in one of her works, "Réponse au silence de M. de la Motte."

Writing at this time of the style of French governess in vogue, namely, the *ultra-French*, she says: "A lady governess of this party and one of the Orleans or *Libéral* party met and came to high words, till all was calmed by the timely display of a ball-dress trimmed with roses alternately red and white—'Garniture aux préjugés vaincus!'"

"Remember," she writes when hurriedly finishing a letter, "that I don't forget to tell you of Lady Bredalbane having been left in her carriage fast asleep, and rolled into the coach-house of an hotel at Florence and nobody missing her for some time, and how they went to look for her, and how ever so many carriages had been rolled in after hers, and

how she wakened, and—— I must sign and seal!"

We are tempted to insert here passages from two letters of Maria Edgeworth, although they were written at a later date.

The first is addressed to Lady Holland after enjoying happy intercourse in England with the Rev. Sydney Smith, Lady Holland's father. Miss Edgeworth begins her letter by remarking playfully that she wishes an Irish bishopric could be forced upon him so that he would be obliged to live in Ireland.

"He would see," she writes, "in the twinkling of an eye (such an eye as his) all our manifold grievances up and down the country. . . . One letter from Sydney Smith on the affairs of Ireland, with his *name* to it and, after having *been there*, would do more for us than his letters did for America and England; a bold assertion you will say, and so it is; but I *calculate* that Pat is a far better subject for wit than Jonathan. It only plays round Jonathan's head, but it goes to Pat's heart, to the very bottom of his heart, where he loves it; and he don't care whether it is for or against him, so that it is *real* wit and fun.

"Now Pat would dote upon your father, and kiss the rod with all his soul he would—the lash just lifted—when he'd see the laugh on the face, the kind smile, that would tell him it was all for

his good. Your father would lead Pat (for he'd never drive him) to the world's end, and may be to common sense at the end."*

The second letter was written when Maria was making a little tour in Connemara and the neighbouring country, in company with her friends Sir Culling and Lady Smith. The latter was a daughter of Mrs. Carr of Hampstead, and must have been one of the masqueraders at the family *fête*.

"Smugglers and caves," she writes, "and murders and mermaids, and duels and banshees and fairies were all mingled together in my early associations with Connemara and Dick Martin—'Hair-trigger Dick'—who cared so little for his own life, or the life of man, and so much for the life of animals; who fought more duels than any man of even his 'Blue-blaze-devil' day, and who brought the Bill into Parliament for preventing cruelty to animals; henceforward changing his cognomen from 'Hair-trigger Dick' to 'Humanity Martin.'"

The party travelled in a large family coach and four.

"The first bad step we came to," writes Miss Edgeworth, "was indeed a slough. . . . The horses, the moment they set their feet upon it, sank up to their knees, and were whipped and spurred, and

* *See* "Memoirs of the Rev. Sydney Smith," by his daughter, Lady Holland.

they struggled and floundered and the carriage, as we inside passengers felt, sank and sank. Sir Culling was very brave and got down to help. The postillions leaped off, and, bridles in hand, gained the *shore*, and by dint of tugging and whipping and hallooing, and dragging of men and boys, who followed, we were got out and were on the other side.

"Further on we might fare worse from what we could learn, so in some commotion we got out and said we would rather walk. When we came to the next bad step the horses, seeing it was a slough like the first, absolutely refused to set foot upon it . . . so they were taken off and left to look on, while by force of arms the carriage was to be got over by men and boys, who, shouting, gathered from all sides; from mountain paths down which they poured, and from fields where they had been at work or loitering. . . . 'This heavy carriage! sure it was impossible, but sure they might do it,' . . . and in spite of all remonstrance about breaking the pole . , . they seized . . . the carriage, and standing and jumping from stone to stone, or any tuft of bog that could bear them . . . they, I cannot tell you how, dragged, pushed and *screamed* the carriage over.

"Sir Culling got over *his* way, and Lady Smith would not be carried, but leaping and assisted by men's arms and shouts, she got to the other side.

A great giant of the name of Alick Burke took me up in his arms as he might a child or a doll, and proceeded to carry me over—while I, exceedingly frightened and exceedingly civil and . . . (very like Rory in his dream on the eagle's back in his journey to the moon), kept alternately flattering my giant and praying, 'Sir, sir, pray set me down; do let me down now, sir, pray.'

"'Be asy, be *quite*, can't you, dear, and I'll carry you over to the other side safely, all in good time,' floundering as he went.

"'Thank you, sir, thank you. Now sir, now set me down, if you will be so very good, on the bank.'

"Just as we reached the bank he stumbled and sank knee-deep, but threw me, as he would a sack, to shore, and the moment I felt myself on *terra firma* I got up and ran off and never looked back, trusting that my giant knew his own business; and so he did, and all dirt and bog-water was beside me again in a trice. 'Did not I carry you over well, my lady? Oh, it's I am used to it!'"

CHAPTER XXVI

IN PARIS AGAIN

Miss Edgeworth had long cherished a desire to revisit Paris, and to do so in company with two of her younger sisters. But there were difficulties in the way. She had been engaged ever since her father's death in editing his Memoirs and in adding to them a volume of her own writing, and this work she wished to finish before leaving home. In the course of the month of February 1820, news was received of the assassination of the Duc de Berri, to which Maria alludes in the following unpublished letter to her friend Dr. Holland, dated February 25: "If there be not an explosion, or a revolution in Paris before the end of next month, I shall be there with two of my sisters, Fanny and Harriet, in the second week in April—provided always that Hunter finishes printing my father's Memoirs by that time. Till I have corrected the last proof-sheet I shall never stir. I do not speak to you of my anxiety about that book, it is too deep down in my mind to talk much about."

The book was finished by the time specified, and public affairs in France becoming less ominous the three travellers started from Edgeworthstown for Paris on April 3.

Steamboats, we are told, had only begun to ply between Dublin and Holyhead in 1819, and Maria's first experience of a steamboat was in crossing the Irish Channel. She disliked the *jigging* motion, which she said was "like the shake felt in a carriage when a pig is scratching himself against the hind wheel, while waiting at an Irish inn door."

After breaking their journey at various places the party reached Calais on April 22. Miss Edgeworth writes the following day from Dessin's Hotel:

"We arrived here last night at half-past seven—Fanny and Harriet sat on deck; I sat in Mrs. Moilliet's carriage. We spent Saturday at Dover with them; they go on now direct to Geneva."

Her next letter is from Paris. It is dated "Place du Palais Bourbon, April 29."

"One moment of reward," she writes, "for two days of indescribable hurry, I have at this quiet interval after breakfast, and I seize it to tell you that Fanny is quite well; so far for health. For beauty, I have only to say that I am told by everybody that my sisters are *lovely* in English and *charmante* in French. Last night was their *début*

A CORNER OF THE PLACE DU PALAIS BOURBON

at Lady Granard's—a large assembly of all manner of lords, ladies, counts, countesses, princes and princesses, French, Polish and Italian; Marmont and Humboldt were there. I was told by several persons of rank and taste . . . that my sisters' dress, the grand affair at Paris, was *perfection*, and I believed it!

"*May* 3.—On Sunday we went with the Countess de Salis and the Baronne de Salis, who is also Chanoinesse, but goes into the world in roses and pink ribbons nevertheless, and is very agreeable moreover, and M. le Baron, an Officer in the Swiss Guards, an old bachelor, to St. Sulpice, to hear M. Fressenus: he preached . . . with intolerable monotony of thumping eloquence, against *les Libérals*, Rousseau, &c.; it seemed to me old stuff, ill-embroidered, but it was much applauded. . . .

"After church a visit to Madame de Pastoret. . . . Fanny and Harriet were delighted with the beauty of the house till they saw her and then nothing could be thought of but her manner and conversation. . . . She is little changed."

M. de Pastoret had been created a peer of France under the Restoration, and now, in 1820, had just been made Vice-President of the Chambers.

"After a ball at the Polish Countess Orlowski's," continues Maria, "where Fanny and Harriet were delighted with the children's dancing . . . I went with the Count and Countess de Salis, and la

Baronne . . . to the Duchesse d'Escars'; who *receives* for the King at the Tuileries . . . (I was told that the first time it must be without my sisters). [We] mounted a staircase of one hundred and forty steps—I thought the Count's knees would have failed while I leaned on his arm; my own ached.

"A long gallery, well lighted, opened into a suite of little low apartments, most beautifully hung, some with silk and some with cashmere, some with tent drapery, with end-ottomans; lamps in profusion. These rooms, with busts and pictures of kings, swarmed with old nobility with historic names, stars, red ribbons, and silver bells at their button-holes: ladies in little white satin hats and *toques*, with a profusion of ostrich or, still better, *marabout* powder-puff feathers; and the roofs were too low for such lofty heads."

This allusion of Miss Edgeworth's to the wearing of silver bells by the old nobility is thus explained. The *Emigrés* who returned to France at the time of the Restoration were, almost all of them, entitled to wear the Cross of St. Louis, but as a matter of fact very few of them possessed the decoration. It had either been destroyed, lost, or sold to relieve their necessities, during the evil days of the Revolution, and, therefore, for a while a tiny silver bell, costing only about half a franc, was worn at the button-hole to denote the fact that the Cross of

Delaroche

LE MARQUIS DE PASTORET

St. Louis should have hung there. Gradually, however, as Paris settled down and times became better, and the *ci-devant Emigrés* and the Sovereign could afford it, the little bells disappeared and the Cross of St. Louis took their place.

"After a most fatiguing morning at all the impertinent and pertinent dressmakers and milliners, we finished by the dear delight of dining with Madame Gautier at Passy: drive there delicious: found her with her Sophie, now a matron mother with her Caroline, like what Madame Gautier and her Sophie were in that very room eighteen years ago. All the Delessert family that remain were assembled except Benjamin, who was detained by business in Paris. Madame Benjamin is very handsome; François the same you saw him, only with the additional crow's-feet of eighteen years, sobered into a husband and father, the happiest I ever saw in France.

"They have three houses, and the whole three terraces form one long pleasure-ground: Judas-tree, like a Brobdingnag almond-tree, in full flower; lilacs and laburnums in abundance."

"Tuesday we were at the Louvre: many fine pictures left. Dined at home: in the evening to Madame de Pastoret's to meet the Duchesse de Broglie: very handsome, little, with large soft dark eyes; simple dress, winning manner . . . speaks English better than any foreigner I ever

heard; not only gracious but quite *tender* to me."

This young Duchesse de Broglie was Albertine de Staël, the only daughter of Mme. de Staël. The Comtesse de Boigne thus describes her: "In spite of her hair of a somewhat pronounced colour and a few freckles, Albertine de Staël was one of the most attractive and charming persons I ever met." And another contemporary speaks of her as "excessively pretty and very clever."

Fanny Edgeworth writes on May 21: "We have just paid a visit to the Duchesse de Broglie and found her at home, alone, with her little girl running about the room. . . . We shall see her at Coppet, indeed she seems very anxious not only to see Maria but to know her."*

"After Madame de Pastoret's," continues Miss Edgeworth, "we went to the Ambassador's:† received in the most distinguished manner. Crowds of fine people, saw and conversed with Talleyrand, but he said nought worth hearing."

"*May* 20.—Lady Elizabeth Stuart has been most peculiarly civil to 'Madame Maria Edgeworth et Mesdemoiselles ses sœurs' which is the form on our visiting tickets, as I was advised it should be."

The French lackeys found the word "Edgeworth"

* Edgeworth MSS.

† Sir Charles Stuart was English Ambassador at this time.

very difficult to pronounce; the nearest approach to it, on their part, being "Edgevatz"; but even this was not possible to all. On one occasion, when Maria had repeated "Edgeworth" several times over to a valet, the man exclaimed in despair, "Ah! je renonce à ça!"

"The Ambassador's Hotel," writes Miss Edgeworth, "is the same which Lord Whitworth had, which afterwards belonged to the Princess Borghese; delightful! opening on to a lawn-garden, with terraces and conservatories, and a profusion of flowers and shrubs. The dinner splendid but not formal; and nobody can *represent* better than Lady Elizabeth. . . .

"Paris is wonderfully embellished," she remarks, "since we were here in 1803. Fanny and Harriet are quite enchanted with the beauty of the Champs Elysées and the Tuileries gardens; the trees out in full leaf, and the deep shade under them is delightful. I had never seen Paris in summer so I enjoy the novelty. Some of our happiest time is spent in driving about in the morning or returning at night by lamp or moonlight.

"Yesterday," continues Miss Edgeworth, "we had intended to have killed off a great many visits, but the fates willed it otherwise. Mr. Hummelaur, attached to the Austrian Embassy, came; and Mr. Chenevix. . . . While he was here came Madame de Villeneuve and Madame Kergolay, Lovell's

friends, who spoke of him with real affection. Scarcely were they gone, when I desired Rodolphe

THE ENGLISH EMBASSY

to let no other person in, as the carriage had been ordered at eleven, and it was now near two.

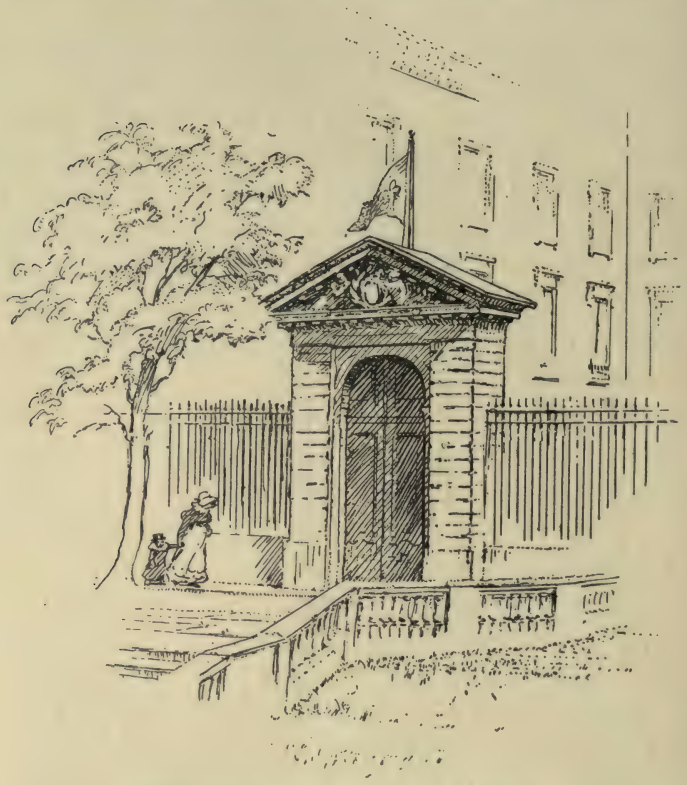
"'Miladi,' cried Rodolphe, running in with a card, 'voilà une dame qui me dit de vous faire voir son nom.'

"Madame de Roquefeuille with her bright benevolent eyes [appeared]: much agreeable conversation about Lovell. There is a great deal of difference between the manners, tone, pronunciation, and quietness of demeanour of Madame de Pastoret, Madame de Roquefeuille, and the little old Princesse de Broglie Revel, old nobility, and the striving, struggling of the new, with all their riches and titles, who can never attain this indescribable incommunicable charm.

"But to go on with Saturday: Madame de Roquefeuille took leave and we caparisoned ourselves and went to Lady de Ros. She at her easel copying very well a portrait of Madame de Grignan; very agreeable half-hour. . . .

"We were engaged to Cuvier's in the evening. . . . Such streets! such turns! in the old, old parts of the city: lamps strung at great distances: a candle or two from high houses, making darkness visible: then bawling of coach or cart men, 'Ouais! ouais!' backing and scolding, for no two carriages could by any possibility pass in these narrow alleys. I was in a very bad way, as you may guess, but I let down the glasses, and sat as still as a frightened mouse. Once I diverted Harriet by crying out, 'Ah! mon *cher* cocher,

arrêtez.' . . . At last we turned into a *porte cochère* under which the coachman bent literally



ENTRANCE TO THE COLLÈGE DE FRANCE

double; total darkness; then suddenly trees, lamps and buildings; and one brighter than the rest by an open portal illuminating large printed letters, 'Collège de France.'

"Cuvier came down to the very carriage door to receive us, and handed us up narrow, difficult stairs into a smallish room, where were assembled many ladies and gentlemen of most distinguished names and talents. Prony, as like an honest water-dog as ever; Biot, a fat double volume of himself. . . . Then Cuvier presented Prince Czartorinski, a Pole, and many compliments passed; and then we went to a table to look at Prince Maximilian de Neufchâtel's 'Journey to Brazil' magnificently printed in Germany, and all tongues began to clatter and it became wondrously agreeable; and behind me I heard English well spoken, and this was Mr. Trelawny, and I heard a panegyric on the Abbé Edgeworth, whom he knew well. . . .

"Tea and supper together: only two-thirds of the company could sit down, but the rest stood or sat behind, and were very happy, loud, and talkative: science, politics, literature, and nonsense in happy proportions. Biot sat behind Fanny's chair and talked of the parallax and Dr. Brinkley. Prony, with his hair nearly in my plate, was telling me most entertaining anecdotes of Buonaparte; and Cuvier, with his head nearly meeting him, talking as hard as he could: not *striving* to show learning or wit—quite the contrary: frank open-hearted genius. . . . Harriet was on the off side, and every now and then he turned to her in the midst of his anecdotes, and made her completely one of us: and

there was such a prodigious noise nobody could hear but ourselves.

"Both Cuvier and Prony agreed that Buonaparte never could bear to have any answer but a *decided* answer. 'One day,' said Cuvier, 'I nearly ruined myself by considering before I answered. He asked me, "Faut-il introduire le sucre de betterave en France?" "D'abord, Sire, il faut songer si vos colonies——" "Faut-il avoir le sucre de betterave en France?" "Mais, Sire, il faut examiner——" "Bah! je le demanderai à Berthollet."'

"This despotic, laconic mode of insisting on learning everything in two words had its inconveniences. One day he asked the master of the woods at Fontainebleau 'How many acres of wood here?' The master, an honest man, stopped to recollect. 'Bah!' and the under-master came forward and said any number that came into his head. Buonaparte immediately took the mastership from the first and gave it to the second. 'Qu'arrivait-il?' The rogue who gave the guess answer was soon found cutting down and selling quantities of the trees, and Buonaparte had to take the rangership from him and reinstate the honest hesitator."

CHAPTER XXVII

THE ABBAYE-AUX-BOIS

Miss Edgeworth, after dining in company with a large and brilliant assemblage at the English Embassy, writes: "Lady Elizabeth asked us to go with her and Mrs. Canning to the Opera, but we were engaged to Madame Récamier; and as she is no longer rich and prosperous, I could not break the engagement."

It is true that Madame Récamier had lost her fortune. She was no longer living in luxury and ease in the magnificent Hotel of the Rue du Mont Blanc, where Miss Edgeworth had visited her in 1802. But Maria, in her generous sympathy with the distressed, was quite unaware that Madame Récamier was exerting a wider influence over society in her reduced circumstances than she had done even in the height of her prosperity.

The Comtesse de Boigne has given an interesting account in her *Mémoires* of the way in which Mme. Récamier bore her sudden loss of fortune. The loss occurred in the month of

February 1806. The Comtesse had been visiting her friend in the beautiful Château of Clichy-la-Garenne, where everything bespoke ease, happiness and security, when the news burst upon Paris of the bankruptcy of M. Récamier.

"I went at once," writes the Comtesse, "to Madame Récamier. I found her so calm, so noble, so simple under this trial; her lofty and pure character rising above all the mere exterior circumstances of her life, that I was deeply impressed. From that moment dates my warm affection for her—an affection which subsequent vicissitudes, which we have both experienced, have only confirmed and strengthened."

Not only had Mme. Récamier suffered this total change in her outward circumstances, but she had also suffered exile from her home and her country. This exile was inflicted by Napoleon on account of her steady attachment to Mme. de Staël, whom she had fearlessly visited in her banishment.

Now in the year 1820 she was living in some small rooms on the third story of the Abbaye-aux-Bois, an ancient convent whose wide court-yard opened into the Rue de Sèvres. At the back lay a garden enclosed within the stone buildings of the convent, with their arched cloister windows below and deep tiled roofs above.

Here in her tiny parlour beneath the tiles—her

cellule, as her friends called it—Mme. Récamier "reigned" over the most attractive society that Paris could produce. For here she had established by the mere force of her charming personality and of her kindly hospitality her *foyer littéraire*.

Chateaubriand has described his first visit to the Abbaye-aux-Bois:

"When almost breathless," he writes, "after climbing the stairs to the third floor I entered the *cellule* as evening was approaching, I was enchanted with what I saw. Its windows looked down upon the garden of the Abbaye, where among the flower-beds and shrubs the nuns were pacing to and fro and children were at play. The topmost boughs of an acacia just reached the level of the eye; here and there a church-spire rose dark against the sky, and in the far distance could be seen the hills of Sèvres. The setting sun gilded the scene and shot his rays through the open windows over which birds were settling themselves for the night. I had reached a region of silence and solitude above the noise and tumult of a great city."*

However much Chateaubriand admired the peace and solitude of the Abbaye he probably agreed with the sentiment expressed in the epigram: "O, la Solitude est une belle chose; mais il faut avoir

* *See* "Mémoires d'outre Tombe," par F. D. de Chateaubriand,

quelqu'une à qui l'on puisse dire, 'La Solitude est une belle chose!'"

We owe to the Duchesse d'Abrantes a further account of the *cellule* and its *habitués*.

"Not only was the little room on the third floor of the Abbaye-aux-Bois," she writes, "the goal of Mme. Récamier's friends, but even strangers and foreigners who had formerly begged for admittance to the elegant hotel in the [Rue du Mont Blanc], now solicited the same favour in regard to the Abbaye. One would have supposed that some fairy power must have been at work to render the steep climb up to the *cellule* specially easy on their account. But a recompensing sight awaited these strangers, one as singular perhaps as any that Paris could afford, that of men holding every kind of political opinion united, so to say, under one banner, marching side by side and almost hand in hand in a space of ten feet by twenty!"

We can picture to ourselves the appearance of this small room with its "bricked floor," as Chateaubriand tells us it was, "furnished with a bookcase, a harp, a piano, a portrait of Mme. de Staël, and a view of Coppet by moonlight. On the window-sills," he adds, "there were jars of flowers."

Maria Edgeworth writes on May 20 (1820): "We went to Madame Récamier's in her convent, L'Abbaye-aux-Bois, up seventy-eight steps; all

THE ABBAYE-AUX-BOIS

came in with the asthma. . . . Madame Récamier is still beautiful, still dresses herself and her little room with elegant simplicity, and lives in a convent only because it is cheap and respectable. M. Récamier is living; they have not been separated by anything but misfortune. . . . [We met] Matthieu de Montmorenci, the Ex-Queen of Sweden, and Madame de Boigne, a charming woman."

It is pleasant to know that Maria thus formed the acquaintance of the Comtesse de Boigne, whose *Mémoires* we have so frequently had occasion to quote. No wonder Miss Edgeworth found her "a charming woman," for there is in all her writings a simplicity and candour united with grace of style that would especially appeal to Maria's turn of mind.

The chivalric Matthieu de Montmorenci was an ardent friend and admirer of Madame Récamier. His sentiments were shared by other members of his family—notably by his cousin Adrien, Duc de Laval, and also by his cousin's young son. Adrien wrote playfully to Mme. Récamier, "C'est le sort des Montmorenci—ils ne mouraient pas tous, mais tous étaient frappés!"

"Nearly all Mme. Récamier's male friends," remarks Sainte-Beuve, "had begun by being in love with her, but she possessed the truly magic power of converting their love by imperceptible degrees

into friendship; and that while still leaving to them all the bloom and perfume of their original sentiment."

One of her greatest attractions, we are told, lay in the fact that she had no desire to shine herself in conversation, but to bring into prominence the talents of those with whom she conversed. Her very silence is said to have been "full of intelligence." That she *could* talk extremely well there is no doubt. An intimate friend, writing in later years of her, says: "I never knew anybody who could tell a story as she did—*des histoires de société;* she had a great sense of humour, and her own humour was exceedingly delicate, but she never said an unkind thing of any one."

Mme. Récamier's face with all its loveliness was evidently a difficult one to fix upon canvas. Perhaps it required a Sir Joshua Reynolds to succeed, for he would have suggested, by his subtile touch, the equal loveliness of her mind.

"Many portraits have been painted of Mme. Récamier," observes the Comtesse de Boigne, "but, in my opinion, not one of them reproduces the expression of her true character. This is the more excusable," she adds, "as her face is extremely mobile. Every one has praised her incomparable beauty, her active benevolence and gentle courtesy . . . but very few were able to discover, beneath the easy manners of her social intercourse,

the loftiness of her mind and the independence of her character."

The Duchess of Devonshire, who was an intimate friend, remarked of her: "First she's good, next she's *spirituelle*, and after that she's beautiful."

Another friend and contemporary, quoted by Sainte-Beuve, says of her: "She possessed what Shakespeare has termed the 'milk of human kindness.' Her eyes were fully open to the defects of her friends but she tended their defects as she would have tended their physical infirmities; and thus she became the Sister of Charity to their troubles, their weaknesses, and even in part to their faults."

One of the most conspicuous of this class was Chateaubriand, whose later works would hardly have been given to the public but for her gentle care and sympathy. "All her faculties were put into play," writes the Comtesse, "to soothe the susceptibilities of his self-love, to calm the irritability of his temperament, to 'chercher pâture à sa vanité et distraction à son ennui.'" Her efforts, indeed, to rescue Chateaubriand from "the fiend *ennui*" exceeded, we are told, even those of Mme. de Maintenon on behalf of Louis XIV.

Boileau is known to have said, "I have observed that when the tone of the conversation [at Court] ceased to be that of adulation, the King always showed signs of weariness and was on the point of

yawning or of quitting the room." "Every great poet who is growing old," remarks Sainte-Beuve, "is somewhat of a Louis XIV. Madame Récamier assembled from all quarters the old friends and the new admirers of Chateaubriand to entertain him; and in truth," he adds, reverting to his own personal recollections of the gentle hostess, "she bound us all with a chain of gold to the foot of his statue."

The Comtesse de Boigne, however, was not one of the persons thus bound.

"M. de Chateaubriand," she writes, "had no weak leanings towards the human race. He was interested only in himself, and in the task of erecting a pedestal whence he could look down upon his age; his Memoirs will reveal to the world with what energy he worked, with what perseverance, and with what hope of success. In fact he did succeed," she remarks, "in one sense; that is to say, he managed to create a sort of special atmosphere of which he was the luminary. But as soon as he quitted this atmosphere he was so painfully affected by the outer air that he became insufferably morose. As long, however, as he remained in it no one could be more amiable or radiate his sunshine more graciously.

"I remember," she continues, "being present at a reading of the *Abencérages* at the house of Mme. de Ségur. M. de Chateaubriand read in a voice that thrilled with tender emotion and with that

belief in the value of the text which he invariably felt for all that emanated from his own brain; indeed he entered so completely into the sentiments of his characters that his tears fell down upon the paper. We shared in this emotion and I was fairly spell-bound.

"The reading finished, tea was brought in.

"'Monsieur de Chateaubriand, will you take some tea?'

"'I will thank you for a cup.' Immediately a buzz of voices was heard on all sides:

"'My dear, he would like some tea.'

"'He is going to have some tea.'

"'Give him some tea.'

"'He asks for tea.'

"And ten ladies sprang up to wait upon the idol."

CHAPTER XXVIII

PARISIAN SALONS IN 1820

EARLY in June, whilst Miss Edgeworth and her sisters had been spending a few days with friends in the country, there had been disturbances in the streets of Paris. On their return, they were dining one evening at the house of Mme. Suard when a guest arrived in some perturbation saying he had had to make his way through a mob, and that "the gendarmes were firing—somewhere." Presently the firing could be heard from Mme. Suard's house. "At every shot," we are told, "one of the company took the trouble to turn round and say 'Pooh!' and Madame Suard sat with her knife and fork upright, too much alarmed to eat or even to help her guests." The riots, it appears, were about "la Charte," the charter of the constitution, but they were soon suppressed.

A *bon-mot* of Talleyrand's *à propos* of "la Charte" has been recorded. "The King," he remarked, "uses his Charter as he uses his umbrella. He spreads it open in foul weather,

but tucks it under his arm when the weather is fine."

The reader may remember meeting with Mme. Suard in 1802 when Mr. Edgeworth described her as "a *bel esprit* who aimed at singularity and independence of sentiment." The singularity had evidently increased during the lapse of eighteen years, judging by the following letter from Harriet Edgeworth.

"Maria and I went," she writes, "to tell Mme. Suard that we could take her to the French Opera, as we had doubtfully told her we would. When we went in, Mme. Suard, in a white dimity petticoat and jacket, came running out saying, 'Suis-je heureuse!' 'Oui,' said Maria. 'Ah ciel! comme vous me faites heureuse!' and throwing herself into Maria's arms, she embraced her as if she had saved her life. Having left her in a state of ecstasy, we returned home, dressed and dined at Lady de Ros's.

"[Later on] we called for Mme. Suard, who, in transports, got into the carriage and never ceased talking till we got to the theatre. Then she skipped upstairs a great deal faster than either Fanny or I did—ran along the doors reading the numbers of the boxes, and when there was some difficulty about the tickets, no power could keep her quiet. Instead of sitting down along with us, she flew from door to door, poking [her head] in

through the little windows, resolved to lose nothing that could be got out of this day's pleasuring; and when we did get in [to our box], over the benches she hopped and set herself down in the front row and was at last silent—she only spoke to express her enchantment at a frightful opera of *Œdipe* which was going on, and which touched her so much that she was all in tears.

"When the opera was over a fancy seized Mme. Suard that she would go out and walk in the passage . . . but when Maria told her it could not be, and sit still she must, she submitted like a naughty girl and only stood up, moving about so incessantly that there was some danger of her falling backwards into the pit. The beginning of the ballet *Clari* silenced her. Mme. Bigottini acts beautifully and actually touches simply by her extreme grace, for it is a pantomime, and Mme. Suard was charmed." *

Maria Edgeworth, writing from Paris on July 7, speaks of a breakfast-party at Degerando's at which she had been present. "We met," she says, "Madame de Villette, Voltaire's 'belle et bonne'; she has still some remains of beauty, and great appearance of good-humour. It was delightful to hear her speak of Voltaire with the enthusiasm of affection and with tears in her eyes beseeching us not to believe the hundred misrepresentations we

* Edgeworth MSS.

may have heard, but to trust her, the person who had lived with him long, and who knew him best and last."

We are told by a French biographer of this lady, that in the household of Ferney she held the place, practically, of an adopted daughter of Voltaire's and that he was warmly attached to her. It was not till after his death, it seems, that she became aware of his having written many works of an evil tendency of which her judgment could not approve, but dwelling rather upon the personal kindness she had received from him, than upon those writings, she retained a steady affection for his memory.

During this visit to Paris Miss Edgeworth became acquainted with some members of the Orleans family. "One evening," we are told, "which Maria spent at Neuilly *en famille* impressed her with their unaffected happiness. The Duke * showed her the picture of himself teaching a school in America; Mademoiselle d'Orléans pointed to her harp, and said she superintended the lessons of her nieces; both she and her brother acknowledging how admirably Madame de Genlis had instructed them. But the old Dowager Duchess, whom Maria afterwards visited at Ivry, though she spoke of this lady in a true Christian spirit of forgiveness, admitted in a whisper to Maria and with a shake

* Afterwards King Louis Philippe.

of her head, '*qu'elle m'avait causée bien des chagrins.*'

"In the course of the evening the two eldest boys ran in from an 'Ecole d'Enseignement Mutuel,' which they attended in the neighbourhood, with their school-books in their hands and some prizes they had gained, eager to display them to their mother—a happy, simple, family party."

Almost the whole pile of buildings that formed the Palais de Neuilly, together with their park and gardens, are now unhappily destroyed. Our illustration, taken from an old print, gives some idea of their extent.

The reader may remember that Miss Edgeworth had felt some anxiety respecting the reception by the public of the "Memoirs" of her father. She writes from Paris:

"Everybody of every degree of rank or talent who has read the 'Memoirs' speaks of them in the most gratifying and delightful manner. Those who have fixed on individual circumstances have always fixed on those which we should have considered as most curious. . . . Much as I dreaded hearing [the book] spoken of, all I have yet heard has been what best compensates for all the anxiety I have felt."

After meeting Dumont a few weeks later she writes: "He speaks to me in the kindest, most tender and affectionate manner of our 'Memoirs,'

CHÂTEAU DE NEUILLY, PALACE OF THE ORLEANS FAMILY

He says he hears from England, and from all who have read them, that they have produced the effect we wished and hoped. The MS. had interested him, he said, so deeply that with all his efforts he could not put himself in the place of the indifferent public."

A theory has been started that Maria entertained a sentiment stronger than that of mere friendship for M. Dumont, judging from some of her letters to him recently brought to light. Miss Edgeworth at all times expressed herself with enthusiasm and Irish warmth of heart when writing to those with whom she was at ease, and this was eminently the case with M. Dumont, who was a valued friend and of whose literary talents she had a high opinion. Maria resembled Sir Walter Scott in her generous appreciation of the work of fellow-authors. No one could doubt for a moment either her or Scott's sincerity, yet Mary Berry, feeling Miss Edgeworth's praise to be far beyond her deserts, writes that it depressed her! To some readers, therefore, Maria's glowing expressions might seem to have a deeper meaning than was intended. We find that those members of the Edgeworth family who possess the mass of Edgeworth MSS., and who have studied Maria's character most carefully, do not give credence to the above theory.

Miss Edgeworth writes from Paris in the month of July, "Breakfasted at Camille Jordan's. It was

half-past twelve before the company assembled, and we had an hour's delightful conversation with Camille Jordan and his wife in her spotless white muslin and little cap, sitting at her husband's feet as he lay on the sofa, as clean, as nice, as fresh, and as thoughtless of herself as my mother.

"At this breakfast we saw three of the most distinguished of that party who call themselves *Les Doctrinaires*—and say they are more attached to measures than to men. . . . These were Casimir Perrier, Royer Collard and Benjamin Constant, who is, I believe, of a more violent party. I do not like him at all; his countenance, voice, manner, and conversation are all disagreeable to me. He is very near-sighted, with spectacles which seem to pinch his nose. He pokes out his chin to keep the spectacles on, and yet looks over the top of his spectacles, *squinching* up his eyes so that you cannot see your way into his mind. . . . He does not give me any confidence in the sincerity of his patriotism, nor any high idea of his talents, though he seems to have a mighty high idea of them himself. . . .

"After this breakfast we went to the Duchesse d'Uzé—a little, shrivelled, thin, high-born, high-bred old lady, who knew and admired the Abbé Edgeworth, and received us with distinction as his relatives."

Affairs had greatly changed in France since

1803, when Mr. Edgeworth was ordered to leave Paris, because Buonaparte supposed him to be the Abbé Edgeworth's brother. Now, as in the case of the Duchesse d'Uzé, the connection with the heroic Abbé had become a passport for Maria and her sisters to many of the houses of distinguished persons.

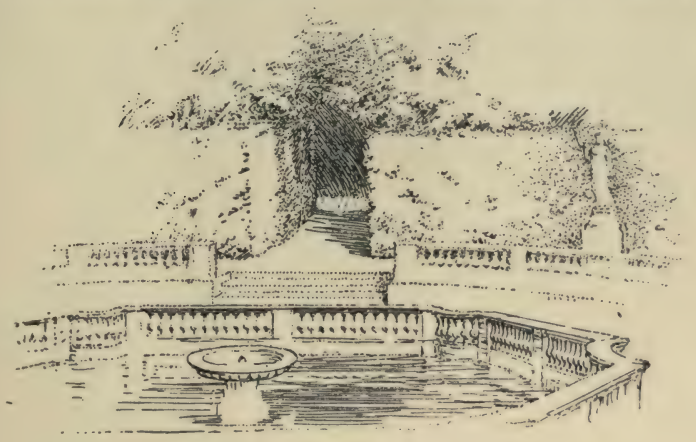
Parties ran high in 1820, and Maria found that in large mixed assemblies the conversation was not so agreeable for foreigners as it had been eighteen years earlier. Then, when it was dangerous under Buonaparte's system of *espionnage*, to talk openly of politics, there was at least this advantage that the talk naturally flowed into safer and pleasanter channels. A new word—*politiquer*—had now been invented. The *Emigrés* spoke of Liberals with the bitterest detestation as revolutionary monsters; while the Liberals spoke of Ultras as bigoted idiots. "Maria did not sympathise with the violence of either party," writes Mrs. Edgeworth, "but made her own diversion and drew her own moral from it. She perceived that neither the men, who clustered together apart from the ladies, nor the ladies, who screamed politics to attract their notice, understood what they were talking about; and she always made them agreeable to her and to themselves, by turning whomsoever she conversed with away from Ultraism and Liberalism, to wit, science or literature." Even

the Buonapartists found pleasure in conversing with Miss Edgeworth, and in expressing to her their mingled feelings of regret at the loss of their hero, and of relief from his imperiousness. "The manner in which she entered into and understood this mixed feeling made the conversation, of which she was the centre, more real and less conventional than was to be heard in any other part of an assembly.

"But the most singular of Maria's powers of attraction," continues the writer, "was the delight which young men of fashion took in her company—those of both the styles then in vogue—the light, easy, enjoying-the-world style, and what was then becoming the mode, melancholy and Byronic. . . . One of the latter appeared to be fascinated by Maria, though she laughed at his anti-French efforts to be *triste*, and ridiculed his fondness for *le vague* in poetry."

At a small select soirée at Mme. d'Escars', where "la délicate et charmante science de la bonne compagnie" prevailed, the conversation happened to turn on *dandies*. "It was excessively entertaining," writes Miss Edgeworth, "to hear half a dozen Parisians all speaking at once, giving their opinion of the English *dandies*, who have appeared in Paris; describing their manners and sometimes by a single gesture giving an idea of the whole man. Then discussing the difference between the *petit*

marquis of the old French comedy and the present dandy. After many attempts at definition, and calling in Madame d'Arblay's Meadows, with whom they are perfectly acquainted, they came to '*d'ailleurs c'est inconcevable ça.*' And Madame d'Escars, herself the cleverest person in the room,



BOSQUET DES DÔMES, VERSAILLES

summed it up; '*L'essentiel c'est que notre dandy, il veut plaire aux femmes s'il le peut; mais votre dandy Anglais ne le voudrait, même s'il le pourrait!*'"

Miss Edgeworth speaks in one of her published letters of spending "a very pleasant day at dear Madame de Roquefeuille's at Versailles." In the following unpublished letter, addressed to her aunt, Miss Mary Sneyd, she gives an account

of this same visit. The letter is dated July 7, 1820.

"When we arrived," she writes, "Madame de Roquefeuille opened her dining-room door herself, hearing somebody coming upstairs. At first she looked in dismay at the appearance of company, but the instant she saw who we were her countenance lightened, and she ran forward and embraced me, till she almost flattened me against her warm heart.

"'Mais, ma chère amie, vous me trouvez dans un embarras!'

"'What is the matter?'

"'Two bishops have just sent me word that they will come from Paris to dine with me to-day. One an old man of eighty-seven, whose whole soul and body now are in his dinner. Tous les deux gourmands, mangeant comme des ogres—l'un comme *un* ogre, mais vraiment, l'autre comme *quatre* ogres! And I have received their note by this vile *petite poste* but this moment, and I have nothing—nothing!'

"She sent, however, to a *traiteur*, that last resource, and most of our morning was spent in guessing whether these bishops would or would not come. Four o'clock came—then a rattling carriage—here they are! No! rattle passed. At last when we had just given them up, rattle, rattle—dash, and stop. Here they are! And a more

FANNY EDGEWORTH

curious, entertaining, tiresome, comic, melancholy scene than the whole dinner, and whole appearance and conversation of these two old bishops, I never saw or heard.

"The first, the 87, Bishop of Agen, *grand aumônier du Roi*, was a little hunchbacked, decrepit man, with a face of a monkey, with eyes that had been acute, but were now almost meaningless; a head close-shaved in a little white wig, made to imitate grey hair as well as it could (viz., very ill). And this wig was quite crooked on the unconscious prelate's head. No collar to his black coat left his little shrunk neck more conspicuous. Still, and through all, he looked like a gentleman. The other, of larger stature and more erect mien, might be about 60—a jovial kind of bishop—the Bishop of Carcassonne.

"Dinner—dinner—dinner! was the grand sole object of both for the first two hours—the first hour in expectation, the second in enjoyment. Yes, in real enjoyment, for, in spite of all obstacles, Mme. de Roquefeuille had a good dinner for them. Not such a dinner as would have contented two English bishops; because their souls would have been set on far different and more substantial fare, more grandly served. But the substance of good eating, no matter for the form, was here, and much it was enjoyed, with napkin under chin, and chicken-legs gnawing!

"(I beg your pardon, my dear Aunt Mary, but upon my word it's true.)

"The ease and good-breeding of Mme. de Roquefeuille were charming. No one who saw her could have doubted that she had been used to live in the very best company, though not of this day, or this day's fashion. The *talk* was now and then of the great, and the princes of other times, and often of the Court of this day; with bitterness and indiscretion on the part of Carcassonne. Poor Agen was dead and gone almost to all things but his dinner, and of this he could not eat as much as could be wished. In the middle of dinner he turned to Fanny and said pathetically, 'On dit que je suis gourmand, mais vraiment je ne le suis pas. Je ne mange *que* mon dîner—point de déjeuner, que mon dîner!' And, indeed, as Fanny, who pitied him much, avers, he ate but little after all.

"These two bishops came twelve miles to this dinner and returned that night."

CHAPTER XXIX

COPPET

EARLY in the month of August (1820) Maria Edgeworth and her sisters left Paris for Geneva, where they had been invited to pay a visit to their Irish friends Mr. and Mrs. Moilliet, who had a house at Pregny, near Geneva.

Thence Maria writes: "I did not conceive it possible that I should feel so much pleasure from the beauties of nature as I have done since I came to this country. The first moment when I saw Mont Blanc will remain an era in my life—a new idea, a new feeling, standing alone in the mind." And she dwells with pleasure on the appearance of the mountain slopes, "cultivated with garden care, green vineyards, patches of *blé de Turquie*, hemp and potatoes, all without enclosure of any kind, mixed with trees and shrubs: then the garden-cultivation abruptly ceasing—bare white rocks and fir above, fir measuring straight to the eye the prodigious height."

"We are most comfortably settled here," she

says. "Dumont, Pictet, Dr. and Mrs. Marcet, and various others dined and spent two most agreeable evenings here. . . . M. Pictet is as kind, as active, and as warm-hearted as ever. . . . Dumont is very kind and cordial. He seems to enjoy universal consideration here and he loves Mont Blanc, next to Bentham, above all created things."

During her sojourn in the neighbourhood of Geneva, Maria had the great pleasure of visiting the château of Coppet, which, since Mme. de Staël's death in 1817, had passed into the hands of her son Auguste de Staël and of her daughter Albertine, now Mme. de Broglie. The château stands, as the reader may remember, on the north-western shore of the Lake of Geneva, and can be seen from the water rising above the village of Coppet, whose cottages seem to nestle beneath its sheltering walls. Lofty mountains form its background.

"What Ferney was to Voltaire," remarks Sainte-Beuve, "Coppet was to Mme. de Staël; but with a much more poetic halo around it and of a nobler existence. Both authors reigned in their exile—but Coppet has counteracted and almost dethroned Ferney."

In a letter dated "Château de Coppet, Sep. 28, 8 A.M.," Miss Edgeworth writes:

"We came here yesterday, and here we are in he very apartments occupied by M. Necker, open-

CHÂTEAU DE COPPET

ing into what is now the library, but what was once that theatre on which Madame de Staël used to act her own 'Corinne.' Yesterday evening when Madame de Broglie had placed me next the oldest friend of the family, M. de Bonstettin, he whispered to me, 'You are now in the exact spot, in the very chair where Madame de Staël used to sit!' Her friends were excessively attached to her. This old man talked of her with tears in his eyes, and with all the sudden change of countenance and twitchings of the muscles which mark strong uncontrollable feeling.

"There is something inexpressibly melancholy, awful, in this house, in these rooms, where the thought continually occurs, here Genius *was!* here *was* Ambition, Love! all the great struggles of the passions; here was Madame de Staël! The respect paid to her memory by her son and daughter and by M. de Broglie is touching."

Maria writes on another occasion: "M. de Staël is correcting for the press 'Les dix Années d'Exil.' He told me that his mother never gave any work to the public in the form in which she had originally composed it. She changed the arrangement and expression of her thoughts with such facility, and was so little attached to her own first views of the subject, that often a work was completely remodelled by her while passing through the press.

"Her father disliked to see her make any formal

preparation for writing when she was young, so that she used to write often on the corner of the chimney-piece, or on a pasteboard held in her hand, and always in a room with others; for her father could not bear her to be out of the room—and this habit of writing without preparation she preserved ever afterwards."

The Comtesse de Boigne bears testimony to this statement: "Madame de Staël," she says, "had no private study for work. A little writing-case of green morocco, which she placed upon her knees, and carried from room to room, contained both her works and her correspondence and often even this case was surrounded by people. . . . Talking seemed to be the most important business of life at Coppet, and yet almost all the persons composing its society were seriously occupied, as is proved by the large number of works from their pen."

A story is told by one of Mme. de Staël's biographers—M. Albert Sorel—that one day when she and Constant were driving among the mountains with some friends, the subject of Mdlle. de Lespinasse's "Letters," recently published, came under discussion.

"Madame de Staël and Benjamin began to talk, and they talked so well that nobody noticed either a frightful thunderstorm which burst overhead, or the inundated roads, or the long shelter taken by their carriage under the archway of an inn. The

storm passed—Benjamin and Mme. de Staël were talking still, when, arriving at home, the travellers learnt from the servants the adventure that had befallen them."

The Comtesse de Boigne, it appears, was one of this party. She writes: "A terrible storm raged, the night was pitch dark, the postillions lost their way, and we were five hours on the road instead of an hour and a half. On reaching our destination we were confounded by discovering the lateness of the hour and the anxiety we had caused our friends. . . . The enchantress, assisted by Benjamin Constant, had kept us so completely under her spell that we had no thought to bestow on outward circumstances."

Contemporary writers, one after another, bear testimony to the extraordinary power which Mme. de Staël exercised over her hearers. "She was one of those privileged beings," says M. Villemain, "whose lofty and commanding nature can never sink into oblivion; one who seized at once upon the imagination and the heart and whose very countenance was so vividly stamped upon your vision that were you a painter you might represent it upon canvas after the lapse of thirty years, without losing a single trait."

"The study of her character," remarks Mme. Necker de Saussure, "was *l'étude de notre nature faite en grand.*" Her deep-toned voice and her

manners generally were considered by some people to be too masculine, but "her woman's nature showed itself in all she did by her need of affection."

"She never hesitated in speaking," says a friend. "The word which best conveyed her meaning always came uppermost, without effort." "Her conversation," says another, "was never tainted by pedantry or obvious preparation. . . . Its dominant feature was perfect naturalness, and she could talk of dress with as much interest as of the constitution of a State."

It was the opinion of those who knew her well, that Mme. de Staël was yet more remarkable in her talk than in her writings. We can understand this; for eloquent as her pages are, the lack of humour in them cannot but be felt by English readers and we are told that humour was not absent from her conversation.

In the mode of life at Coppet there was much that was strange and grotesque, as well as interesting and noble, just as there was, indeed, in the character of its châtelaine. The Comtesse de Boigne, who had a real affection for Mme. de Staël and for her children, has described it for posterity.

"The life," she says, "seemed idle and irregular in the extreme. There was neither method nor order. No rooms were set apart for any special purpose; but wherever a conversation happened to

Gérard, pinxt. *Braun, Clément & Co., photo.*

ALBERTINE DE STAËL, DUCHESSE DE BROGLIE

commence there all the company soon assembled, and there they would remain for hours together, without being interfered with by any of the ordinary avocations of a household. . . . The children of Madame de Staël were brought up and educated in the midst of this strange existence, in which they appeared to take a part. But they must have had in fact many hours for quiet study, for it is impossible that in the midst of such disorder they could have acquired all the learning and all the accomplishments they possessed, which included several languages, music and dancing, as well as a thorough knowledge of the literature of all Europe.

"They were allowed to follow their own tastes completely. Albertine's were of a grave nature. She was occupied chiefly with metaphysics and religion and the study of German and English literature, [while] Auguste, who possessed less talent for grave subjects than his sister, had in addition to his literary acquirements a truly remarkable gift for music."

"M. de Staël," writes Miss Edgeworth, "speaks English perfectly, and with the air of an Englishman of fashion. . . . He told me of a curious interview he had with Buonaparte, when the [latter] was enraged with Madame de Staël, who had published remarks on his government, concluding with, 'Oh well, you are right. I allow that a son should always defend his mother, but if Monsieur

wishes to write libels he should go to England. Or indeed if he desires fame it is in England that he should seek it—in England or in France—these

VILLAGE AND CHÂTEAU FROM THE LAKE

two countries are the only countries in Europe—nay in the world!' . . .

"M. de Staël called his little brother, Alphonse Rocca, to introduce him to us; he is a pleasing, gentle-looking, ivory-pale boy with dark blue eyes, not the least like Madame de Staël. . . . After our walk [in the grounds] M. de Staël proposed our going on the lake—and we rowed for about an hour. The deep, deep blue of the water, and the varying colours as the sun shone and the shadows

of the clouds appeared on it, were beautiful. When we returned and went to rest in M. de Staël's cabinet, Dumont, who had quoted from Voltaire's 'Ode on the Lake of Geneva,' read it to us."

Miss Edgeworth met many interesting people in the town of Geneva, where Mme. de Staël's inspiring influence was still maintained by her descendants.

"In no place, perhaps, with the exception of Edinburgh," remarks Sainte-Beuve, "was there to be found united within such narrow limits . . . an equal variety of talents, of opinions, and of culture in all its branches—an assemblage [in short] of beings so noble, so enlightened, so animated yet so courteous; in fact, so altogether excellent."

Among the "distinguished women" of Geneva he mentions especially Mme. Necker de Saussure, in whose *salon* there reigned *une grâce piquante et sérieuse*."

It was of this lady that Mme. de Staël said, "She has all the talents that I am supposed to possess and all the virtues that I lack."

Maria speaks with pleasure of meeting her at the house of M. Pictet de Rochemont. "Her manner and figure," she writes, "reminded us of our beloved Mrs. Moutray; she is deaf too, and she has the same resignation, free from suspicion in her expression when she is speaking, and the same gracious attention to the person who speaks to her. . . ."

"M. Pictet de Rochemont," she says, "brother to our old friend, has taken most kind pains to translate the best passages from my father's Memoirs for the Bibliothèque Universelle!"

Miss Edgeworth speaks of meeting another member of the Pictet family—M. Pictet Déodati—of whom she tells us Mme. de Staël said: "If one could take hold of his neckcloth and give him one good shaking, what a number of good things would come out!"

While Miss Edgeworth was in Switzerland, her "Sequel to Rosamond" was passing through the press, and her publisher found that, by some mistake, she had not furnished sufficient MS. to complete the two volumes required. "I was a little provoked with Hunter," she writes to her sister Honora, "for not having counted it himself, and for not letting me sooner know the result. But this feeling lasted but a moment, and my mind fixes on what is to be done? It is by no means necessary for me to be at home or in any particular place to invent or to write. You were satisfied with the little 'Palanquin' addition I sent you, and I hope I shall be able to please you with what I shall write now."

"Maria instantly set to work," writes Mrs. Edgeworth, "to supply the deficiency; and in the midst of all the attractions of a society she particularly enjoyed, where breakfasts, drives, and

evening parties seemed to occupy every hour of every day, she wrote with all her usual ease and spirit the beautiful chapters of 'The Bracelet of Memory,' and 'Blind Kate.'"

Speaking of the many friends with whom Maria had enjoyed intercourse in the neighbourhood of Geneva, the writer remarks: "With M. de Staël and Madame de Broglie, Maria was particularly happy.

"'Comme la Duchesse est charmante!' as Dumont—little given as he was to praise—one night exclaimed, as he was driving home from Coppet with Maria and my daughters.

"Dumont's society, always agreeable, was more than ever delightful at Geneva. He was proud of his country, enthusiastic in his taste for the fine scenery. Cheerful, wise and witty, and full of literary anecdote, his conversation was peculiarly suited to Maria; while he especially gratified her by talking to her sisters and being to them like a kind old uncle."

On quitting Switzerland Maria writes: "Dumont was excessively touched at parting with us, and gave Fanny and Harriet La Fontaine and Gresset, and to me a map of the lake—of the tour we took so happily together."

CHAPTER XXX

FAREWELL TO FRANCE

THE Edgeworths reached Paris, after spending a few days at Lyons, on October 27. Maria writes on the following day from the Hôtel Vauban, 366 Rue Saint-Honoré :

"We arrived here yesterday. Good Mrs. Creed, whom we troubled to look out for lodgings for us, has engaged a floor in this hotel, which we have all to ourselves—very comfortable; the woman of the house respectable and civil, and we have Rodolphe again for our *valet de place*, and a *femme de chambre*, whom I like better than our former Josephine."

In a letter written early in November to her aunt Mrs. Ruxton, she says: "I write this merely to tell you that I have at last had the pleasure of seeing Madame la Comtesse de Vaudreuil, the daughter of your friend. She is an exceedingly pleasing woman, of high fashion, with the remains of great beauty, courteous and kind to us beyond all expectation. She had but a few days in Paris and she made out

two for us; she took us to the Conciergerie to see, by lamp-light, the dungeon where the poor Queen and Madame Elizabeth were confined, now fitted up as little chapels. . . . Who do you think accompanied us to this place? Lady Beauchamp, Lady Longford's mother, a great friend of Madame de Vaudreuil's, with whom we dined the next day, and who had procured for us the Duc de Choiseul's box at the Théâtre Français, when the house was to be uncommonly crowded to see Mademoiselle Duchenois in *Athalie* 'avec tous les Chœurs,' and a most striking spectacle it was! I had never seen Mademoiselle Duchenois to perfection before. . . .

"We have seen Mademoiselle Mars twice, or thrice rather, in the *Mariage de Figaro* and in the little pieces of *Le jaloux sans Amour* and *La jeunesse de Henri Cinq*, and admire her exceedingly."

Mary Berry, who was in Paris a few years earlier, writes: "I long to see Mdlle. Mars again, for perfect she is, and perfect I have no doubt I shall find her. . . . But what a *perfect* thing is French comedy! The representations of *their* life and *their* manners are so perfectly natural that all idea of a theatre vanishes; and as they admit of much more conversation, and less action and bustle, on the stage than we do, one often feels oneself admitted into the interior of a private house, and listening to their family arrangements."

"*En petit comité*, the other night," writes Miss Edgeworth, "at the Duchesse d'Escars', a discussion took place between the Duchesse de la Force, Marmont, and Pozzo di Borgo, on the *bon et mauvais ton* of different expressions—*bonne société* is an *expression bourgeoise*—you may say *bonne compagnie* or *la haute société*, 'Voilà des nuances,' as Madame d'Escars said. Such a wonderful jabbering as these grandees made about these small matters!

". . . We have seen a great deal of our dear Delesserts, and of Madame de Rumford, who gave us a splendid dinner. And one evening with the Princess Potemkin, who is most charming, and you may bless you stars that you are not obliged to read a page of panegyric upon her."

When in Paris during the month of July, Miss Edgeworth had met the Russian Prince, Rostopchin, "the man who burnt Moscow, first setting fire to his own house." "I never saw a more striking Calmuck countenance," she writes. "From his conversation as well as from his actions, I should think him a man of great strength of character."

At Madame Potemkin's the company were telling anecdotes of Rostopchin. "The Governor of Siberia, it seems, lived at St. Petersburg, and never went near his province. One day the Emperor, in presence of the governor and of

Rostopchin, was boasting of his far-sightedness. 'Commend me,' said Rostopchin, 'to M. le Gouverneur, who sees so well from Petersburg to Siberia.'"

Maria writes to her stepmother on November 15: "After leaving Madame Potemkin's we went to see—whom do you think? Guess all round the breakfast-table before you turn over the leaf; if anybody guesses right, I guess it will be Aunt Mary.

"Madame de la Rochejacquelin! She had just arrived from the country, and we found ourselves in a large hotel, in which all the winds of heaven were blowing, and in which, as we went upstairs and crossed the antechambers, all was darkness, except one candle which the servant carried before us. In a small bedroom, well furnished, with a fire just lighted, we found Madame de la Rochejacquelin lying on a sofa—her two daughters at work—one spinning with a distaff, and the other embroidering muslin."

Madame de la Rochejacquelein (for so the name is usually spelt), we would remind the reader, was the heroine of the wars in La Vendée, waged against the Royalists during the first and maddest years of the French Republic. Her *Mémoires*, published in the autumn of 1815, on the final fall of Napoleon, created a widespread sensation. They describe with simplicity and

candour the tragic events of the time. Her first husband, M. de Lescure, who was the fast friend and companion of the heroic Henri de la Rochejacquelein, perished, like him, in the wars. Her second husband, the Marquis de la Rochejacquelein, who was a younger brother of Henri's, was unhappily killed when endeavouring to oppose the advance of Buonaparte and his followers after his escape from Elba.

To return to Miss Edgeworth's account of her visit.

"Madame is a large fat woman," she writes, "with a broad, round, fair face, with a most open benevolent expression. Her hair cut short, and perfectly grey as seen under her cap; the rest of her face much too young for such grey locks; not at all the hard, weather-beaten look that had been described to us, and though her face and *bundled* form and dress all *squashed* on a sofa did not at first promise much of gentility, you could not hear her speak or see her for three minutes without perceiving that she was well-born and well-bred. She had hurt her leg, which was the cause of her lying on the sofa. It seemed a grievous penance, as she is of as active a temper as ever. She says her health is perfect, but a nervous disease in her eyes has nearly deprived her of sight—she could hardly see my face, though I sat as close as I could go to the sofa.

"'I am always sorry,' said she, 'when any stranger

sees me, parceque je sais que je détruis toute illusion. Je sais que je devrais avoir l'air d'une héroine, et surtout que je devrais avoir l'air malheureux ou épuisé au moins—rien de tout cela, hélas!'

"She is much better than a heroine—she is benevolence and truth itself. She begged her daughters to take us into the *salon* to show us what she thought would interest us. . . . At one end of the *salon* is a picture of M. de Lescure, and at the other of Henri de la Rochejacquelin, by Gérard and Girardet, presents from the King. Fine military figures. In the boudoir is one of M. de la Rochejacquelin, much the finest of all—she has never yet looked at this picture.

"Far from being disappointed I was much gratified by this visit."

Soon after this letter was written Miss Edgeworth and her sisters quitted Paris and commenced their long homeward journey. They halted at Calais, whence Maria writes, on December 5, from the Hôtel Dessin:

"Coming back to this place to the same room where we were seven months ago, the whole seems to me and to my companions like a delightful dream, but on waking from Alps, and glaciers, and cascades, and *Mont Blanc*, and troops of acquaintance in splendid succession and visionary confusion—in waking from this wonderful dream the sober certainty of happiness remains and assures us that

all which has passed is not a dream. All our old friends at Paris, still more our friends than ever, and many new ones made. Every expectation, every hope that I had formed for this journey has been more than gratified, far surpassed by the reality; and we return with thorough satisfaction to our own country, looking to our dear home for permanent happiness, without a wish unsatisfied or a regret for anything we have left behind, except our friends."

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